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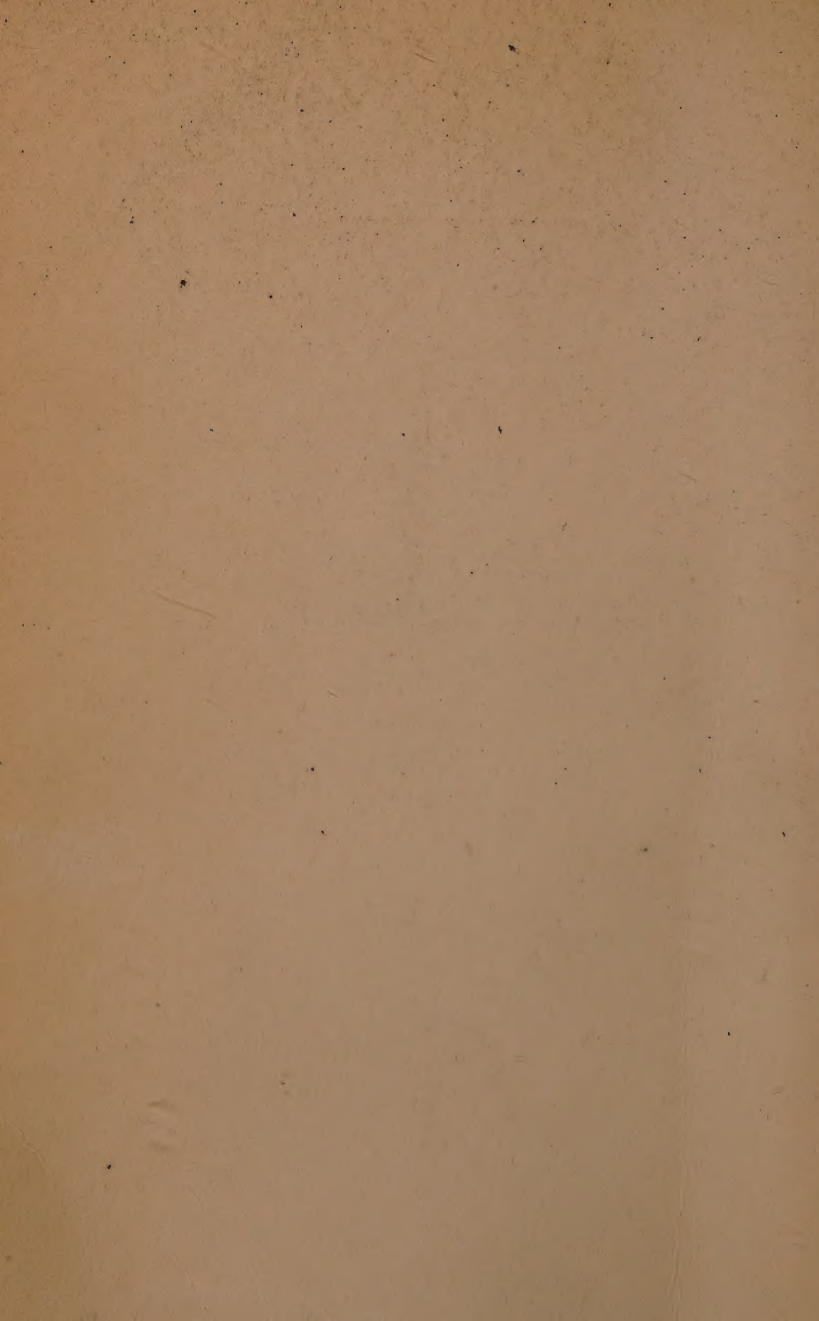








**THE LIFE OF  
LIZA LEHMANN**









LIZA LEHMANN, 1907

From a Miniature Portrait by HERBERT BEDFORD

*(Exhibited 1909 at the Paris Salon,  
Société des Artistes Français)*

# THE LIFE OF LIZA LEHMANN

BY HERSELF

WITH COLOURED FRONTISPIECE  
BY HERBERT BEDFORD AND  
SEVENTEEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW YORK  
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TO MY DARLING SON RUDOLF,  
MY HOPE IN HEAVEN,  
AND TO MY DARLING SON LESLIE,  
MY JOY ON EARTH,  
I DEDICATE THESE PAGES.

L. L.

*September, 1918.*

147300

The Bird of Time has but a little way  
To fly—and lo ! the bird is on the wing.

*“Rubáiyát” of Omar Khayyám,  
translated by Edward FitzGerald.*

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER I

Birth and Parentage—Liszt—Some Nursery Reminiscences—Jenny Lind . . . . pp. 1-10

## CHAPTER II

Our Governesses—Our School-days—My Sisters—My Mother—G. F. Watts—My Future Career . . pp. 11-23

## CHAPTER III

Play-times—My First Concert—Early Impressions—Piano-forte Lessons—Jenny Lind—Italy again—A Dinner with Verdi—Amendola . . . . pp. 24-39

## CHAPTER IV

Studies in Composition—We return to London—A Rubinstein Party—Randegger—On Tact—My Career as Singer . . pp. 40-52

## CHAPTER V

In the Artists' Room—Superstitions—Lillian Nordica—  
 Clara Schumann—Johannes Brahms—Robert Browning—  
 The Pig Book—George du Maurier—Ménie Muriel Dowie  
 —Visit to Bayreuth . . . . . pp. 53-65

## CHAPTER VI

My Marriage—Life at Pinner—Pampered Pets—I compose  
 "In a Persian Garden"—Pinner Neighbours . pp. 66-74

## CHAPTER VII

## "IN A PERSIAN GARDEN"

Mrs. Edward Goetz—The First Performance—First Press  
 Appreciation by Hermann Klein—It arrives viâ New York—  
 Analysis by Professor Edward Dickinson—Sonnet by Angela  
 Goetze—Sonnet by Oliver Grey . . . . . pp. 75-90

## CHAPTER VIII

"In Memoriam"—"The Daisy-chain"—My two Sons—  
 Our Family Rounds Book—"Sergeant Brue"—"The Vicar  
 of Wakefield" . . . . . pp. 91-114

## CHAPTER IX

"The Golden Threshold"—"Once upon a Time"—"Leaves  
 from Ossian"—Needle-work—"The Life of a Rose"—"Bird  
 Songs"—A Quaint Rehearsal—"The Nonsense Songs"  
 pp. 115-123

## CHAPTER X

My American Tours—First Arrival in New York—Ameri-  
 can Voices—Train Journeys—California—Florida—Travelling  
 Conditions . . . . . pp. 124-139



**CHAPTER XI**

American Climate—A Beauty Specialist—A Paris Episode  
—Typical Extracts from American Critiques—American  
Headlines . . . . . pp. 140-158

**CHAPTER XII**

American Interviews—Literary Discrimination—An Offer  
for an Opera—Music Clubs . . . . . pp. 159-170

**CHAPTER XIII**

Provincial Tours—"Behind the Nightlight"—The Society  
of Women Musicians—The Human Voice . . . . . pp. 171-179

**CHAPTER XIV**

Cuxham—"Practical Hints for Students"—Belloc's "Cau-  
tionary Tales"—A Practical Joke—"Parody Pie"—King  
George and King Edward . . . . . pp. 180-196

**CHAPTER XV**

"Magdalen at Michael's Gate"—"Everyman"—Hamish  
McCunn . . . . . pp. 197-206

**CHAPTER XVI**

At the Outbreak of War—My Son Rudolf—The Need of a  
Reform—The After-life—Quotation from Dr. J. Minot Savage  
—My Pupils—"Nothing is impossible"—Highgate Memorial  
—Last Words . . . . . pp. 207-225

AFTERWORD by H. B. . . . . p. 226

INDEX . . . . . pp. 229-232



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<b>LIZA LEHMANN, 1909</b>	<i>Frontispiece</i>	
<i>From a miniature portrait by Herbert Bedford.</i>		
<b>LIZA LEHMANN, 1876</b>	<i>facing</i>	PAGE 10
<i>From a pencil-drawing by A. L. (Mrs. Rudolf Lehmann).</i>		
<b>RUDOLF LEHMANN</b>	<i>facing</i>	16
<i>From a portrait by Sir Hubert Herkomer, R.A.</i>		
<b>MRS. RUDOLF LEHMANN (A. L.)</b>	<i>facing</i>	20
<i>From a portrait by Rudolf Lehmann.</i>		
<b>"INSPIRED"</b>		20
<i>From a pen-and-ink caricature of A. L. by Liza Lehmann.</i>		
<b>"ON A BAT'S BACK"</b>	<i>facing</i>	22
<i>From a pen-and-ink drawing by A. L.</i>		
<b>LIZA LEHMANN, 1880</b>	<i>facing</i>	24
<i>From a portrait by Rudolf Lehmann.</i>		
<b>SLEEPING FAY ON A LILY</b>	<i>facing</i>	30
<i>From a pen-and-ink sketch by Liza Lehmann.</i>		
<b>LIZA LEHMANN, 1894</b>	<i>facing</i>	54
<i>From a photograph by Elliott &amp; Fry.</i>		
<b>HERBERT BEDFORD, 1918</b>	<i>facing</i>	66
<i>From a photograph by L. H. B.</i>		
<b>FACSIMILE OF SONNET BY ANGELAGOETZE</b>		89
<i>Written after the first performance of "In a Persian Garden."</i>		

	PAGE
FACSIMILE OF SONNET TO LIZA LEHMANN BY OLIVER GREY . . . . .	90
RUDOLF ELLIS DAVID BEDFORD, 1909, AND LESLIE HERBERT BEDFORD, 1909 <i>facing</i> <i>From photographs by Sala Arbus.</i>	96
FACSIMILE OF ROUNDS FROM THE FAMILY ROUNDS BOOK . . . . .	97-99
LIZA LEHMANN, 1913 . . . . . <i>facing</i> <i>From a photograph by Violet Blaiklock.</i>	130
RUDOLF E. D. BEDFORD . . . . . <i>facing</i> <i>From a silhouette by Herbert Bedford.</i>	182
LESLIE H. BEDFORD . . . . . <i>facing</i> <i>From a silhouette by Herbert Bedford.</i>	184
LIZA LEHMANN, 1918 . . . . . <i>facing</i> <i>From a photograph by H. Spink, Brighton.</i>	208
FACSIMILE OF A PAGE OF THE LAST SONG WRITTEN BY LIZA LEHMANN . . . . .	216
MEMORIAL TO RUDOLF BEDFORD AT HIGH- GATE. BY MURIEL PERRIN . . . . . <i>facing</i>	224
FACSIMILE OF LIZA LEHMANN'S SIGNA- TURE . . . . .	225



# THE LIFE OF LIZA LEHMANN

## CHAPTER I

Birth and Parentage—Liszt—Some Nursery Reminiscences—  
Jenny Lind

I WAS born in London, at 139, Westbourne Terrace, on July 11th—well, several hundred years ago!

My parents, who lived in Rome, came to London so that, in case I were a boy, I might have the privilege of being a British subject. Girls were not so much considered in those days!

My forbears were of mixed nationality, to say the least. My father, Rudolf Lehmann, a naturalized British subject, came from Hamburg, where his father, a favourite miniature painter (whose mother was English), was married to a lady of Italian extraction, whose people came from Padua, the family name being Delle Vie.

My mother was Scotch, the daughter of the well-known author and publisher, Dr. Robert Chambers of Edinburgh, whose *Vestiges of Creation* foreshadowed the theory of Evolution, afterwards amplified by Darwin.

I was christened "Elisabetha Nina Mary Frederica," from which "Liza" for short was derived (pronounced "Leeza," if you please!), and, as soon as I was old enough to travel, my parents returned to Italy and took me with them. The first five years of my life were spent there, and I spoke Italian before any other language.

Our winters were spent in Rome and the summers in Sorrento, where my little sisters and I ran about bare-foot in the orange-gardens, picking the golden fruit and eating it "hot from the tree." This I do *not* remember, but state it on hearsay.

One is sometimes asked for one's very earliest recollection. In my case the first impression to be remembered—not a very poetic one—was having my nails cut by our old Italian nurse, Maria; and of her telling me to shut my eyes so that the little half-moons should not jump into them.

My father was one of a colony of artists that at that time flourished exceedingly in Rome. Studios were the vogue, and apparently social life was liberally streaked with the Bohemianism of "Upper Bohemia." My father had already lived in Rome for eleven years when he married my mother, later known to the music-public as "A. L.," and she was acclaimed a great favourite when she joined the artists' circle as a young bride.

I often wish now that I had listened with closer attention when my parents told all about those delightful days in Rome, when everybody knew everybody who was anybody, and the people who were representative of their period "hobnobbed" in the most simple and friendly manner.

Among the musicians, Liszt was a particular friend of my parents, and he formed a delightful habit of dropping in for his favourite dish of bacon and eggs, which, by-the-bye, he always pronounced *baccon and aches*. Whilst they were being prepared he often used to play to us on the piano, sometimes his newest compositions, or to rhapsodize in an inspired manner.

When my parents decided to leave Rome and to settle in London, we first lived in Orme Square, near Kensington Gardens. But the grey London days must have been a sorry change for me, accustomed, as I had been, to bask in Italian sunshine and to take my walks on the Pincio, where the Pope (Pius IX) one day stopped to lay his hand on my fair curls, and give me his blessing. Indeed, it seems that, soon after our arrival in London, I was found on my knees fervently praying; and, when disturbed, said: "*Prego Iddio che faccia il cielo più azurro*" (I am asking God to make the sky more blue).

After a short time my father, whose portraits were becoming more and more in request, found a house (1 South Villas, Campden Hill, Kensington) with a very fine studio—or rather two studios, which had formerly belonged to John Phillips, the distinguished painter of Spanish subjects. The house was a rambling one; but my father took great joy in planning, and in having built, a long, narrow conservatory, which formed a charming passage of flowers connecting the reception-rooms with the

studios. The dining-room was called "The Tapestry Room," being hung with very beautiful old Gobelins collected by John Phillips on his travels. There was unfortunately no garden, but from one of the studios a staircase led down to a yard where we installed a flourishing family of cocks and hens. In fact, it was an ideal artist's home; and there I remember a long succession of eminent people coming to have their portraits painted, including shining lights in every walk of life—fashionable beauties, poets, members of the aristocracy, politicians, the Shah of Persia, etc., etc.

One of my father's sitters was Baron de Reuter, of telegraph fame, and when I was about ten years old I became engaged to his son George, who was about the same age as myself, or probably a trifle younger. It came about in this way. One day Baron de Reuter, having called and brought George with him, my sisters and I were sent for and ushered into the drawing-room bedecked in our Sunday pinafores. "Now, my boy," playfully exclaimed the Baron to little George,

“ here’s a chance for you to choose a wife—which shall it be ? ” George gave us a very cursory glance, and, pointing a chubby finger at me, said, “ *That one !* ”

Our engagement lasted some few weeks or months, during which time I must say he was a most attentive cavalier ; but I broke the engagement eventually after a quarrel in Kensington Gardens. We had been planning future arrangements—what sort of house we should live in ; how many servants we should keep ; how many children we intended having, and other such matters which it is always wise to arrange in good time ! Coming to the education of the family, I found that George was for sending all the children to a boarding-school. I indicated to my fiancé that, although I saw eye to eye with him as to the desirability of boarding-schools for all the *boys*, I thought our girls would be better educated at home. He remained adamant, however ; so I came to the conclusion that I would not be linked to a tyrant—and promptly broke off the engagement !

My parents were noted for the musical

soirées given in the studio. My sisters and I were then, of course, too young to be present ; but we regarded these great events from a discreet distance. There was generally a dinner-party first, given in the " Tapestry " room, followed by a reception with music in the larger studio. Whilst dinner was going on, we little girls, with our long hair hanging over the banisters, used to wheedle Chivers, our dear old hired waiter, to hand to us the remains of the ice puddings, meringues, etc., and, when we lay in bed, strains of music from the foremost musicians of the day were wafted up to mingle with our dreams.

If we were too young to be allowed to participate in these festivities, except at a distance, we were often allowed to enter the sacred precincts of the studio when my father was painting a portrait ; not, be it added, to view the portrait, but to amuse the sitter. How well I remember some of them ! Robert Browning, for instance. He soon became "*ami de la maison*." My father painted him several times, and bequeathed one of the portraits to the National Portrait Gallery. Browning



was one of the simplest of men—the very opposite of a *poseur*. His voice was cheery, if rather loud and gruff. He had strained it when he was young, by habitually shouting to his father, who was very deaf. He was always kind and even affectionate to my sisters and me, taking an interest in all our little doings, and sometimes even making us presents of his autographed books.

Then there was Helen Faucit, the celebrated actress, wife of Sir Theodore Martin, Queen Victoria's editor. I think Lady Martin was one of the first to encourage me in some dawning love of romance and poetry. At the time I speak of she had long retired from the stage, but for my benefit she would recall and recite passages from her more famous roles. Perhaps she saw that I had some sensibility, and noticed that my small soul thrilled to the music of her tones. One day a number of costumes were brought, the robes of Shakespeare's heroines and others, that my father might choose the most suitable for the portrait. They were spread all round the "Tapestry" Room,

and oh, what rapture to be allowed to inspect them, and to be told fragments of their intimate histories !

I must very early have shown signs of having some music in me, and, when I felt the need of "giving vent," used to rush into the backyard and sing to the chickens—my first vocal recitals !

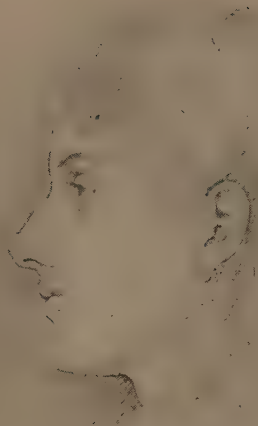
I suppose my small voice must have been at any rate sweet and true, for when I was brought down from the nursery to sing before relations, they often used to be dissolved in tears, and I still remember the surprise with which I beheld this, and—still more amazing—with which I found that they positively seemed to *like* crying. But this was only one of the many queer things that one observed about "grown-ups."

My aunt and godmother, Mrs. Elizabeth Benzon (my father's sister), was one of the most easily affected of my victims ; and, when her tears had been most copious, generally closed the proceedings by giving me some pretty trinket from her jewel-case. Before long I came to regard a heavy downpour as a good augury ! Men-

delssohn's little song *Greeting*, I remember, on one occasion brought on a very ample shower and a turquoise necklace !

One day I was called to the drawing-room to sing to a tall and rather gaunt lady, with a serious face. When I had finished my song, she said ! " If God gives me strength, I should like to teach that child some day." It was the great Jenny Lind ! She was then Madame Otto Goldschmidt, and had retired from what must have been the most marvellous career a singer ever made. Two continents named her the " Swedish Nightingale," and " Jenny Lind fever," as it was called, broke out wherever she appeared. People seemed to go quite mad. Of course I never heard her in her prime, but what I was privileged to hear from her when she was no longer young I have never heard equalled.

But I am anticipating, for at my first meeting with this great artist I was only a little child—still in the nursery—and did not hear her sing until some years later.



**LIZA LEHMANN, 1876**

*From a pencil drawing by A. L. (Mrs. Rudolf Lehmann)*



## CHAPTER II

Our Governesses—Our School-days—My Sisters—My Mother—  
G. F. Watts—My Future Career

WE were educated at home by a long succession of patient and impatient governesses. Among the most patient Griseldas was a charming little lady who eventually married a wealthy Manchester merchant. At a later period (oh, coals of fire!), when I became a singer, and visited Manchester to fulfil engagements, she and her husband invariably insisted on my staying at their comfortable house, where they loaded me with kindness; and not me alone, but also my sister, Marianna, who often went with me on my concert expeditions. In fact, we frequently found delightful surprise gifts in our places at the breakfast-table, and our host used to say, in his simple way: "Because you were so kind to Olga!"

With very different feelings I recall a

specimen from Berlin who very nearly succeeded in quelling our high spirits. She arrived loaded with diplomas, stiff as a ramrod, while discipline scintillated from her pale-green eyes. If a sum had the very natural misfortune to turn out wrong—and arithmetic was ever my *bête noire*—or if the date of a birth or a beheadal were forgotten, we were unceremoniously cuffed about the head, or the lobes of our ears were pulled until the blood simply pounded in them. But far worse was her method of punishment by enforced silence. I was the especial butt of her persecution, and when I once remarked on it, and asked her the reason, she merely answered, “Because you *feel* it most.”

My dear parents were quite unaware of this changed and saddened school-room, for had not the fiat gone forth, “*Downstairs* we are friends”? Luckily for us, a family bereavement compelled this advance copy of Prussian frightfulness to return to the Prussian capital. When our tongues were loosened after her departure, my mother was so distressed at our account of what we had had to endure that she never

could bear the subject mentioned, even in later years.

There was also a Polish lady who came to teach us, but from whom we did not learn much ; for, no doubt in an effort to quell our high spirits and induce a becoming attitude of awe and respect, she spent most of her time in describing the grandeurs of her ancestral home in distant Poland—telling us how her mother was always swathed from head to foot in real sables, and never dreamt of driving out without four coal-black Arab steeds. She did not forget to add that her family was noted for its extraordinary beauty. Her own nose, which had some kind of double knot in it, had, she said, been broken on the ice. Careful examination of her family photographs, however, led us to the conclusion that most of her distinguished relatives must have skated with the same disastrous results.

Looking back to those governess days, I am sure we must have been a severe trial, but oh, how dull they made our lessons !

The education of children has fortunately made great strides since then ; but I wonder



that the educational value of the cinema has not been more exploited. It would be a great day for young folks when they could be taken to the "movies," say for their history and geography lessons. And why not?

At one time we were sent to a day-school, but only for a year, as the experiment was not considered to be a great success. The school was kept by two sisters of John Leech, the artist, and the little Lehmanns, as we were called, were supposed to have entirely upset its usual sedate atmosphere. I started a weekly magazine whilst there, and as I had to double the parts of editor, illustrator, contributor, *and* printer (since I had to write it all out)—there was naturally not much time nor concentration left over for mere lessons! I must add, however, that, if the magazine served no other useful purpose, it was sometimes in great request as a restorative for the flagging spirits of my father's sitters—notably a number containing a contribution by my sister Marianna, which eventually went the round of London. I refer to the affecting little story of a lady whose husband went to the

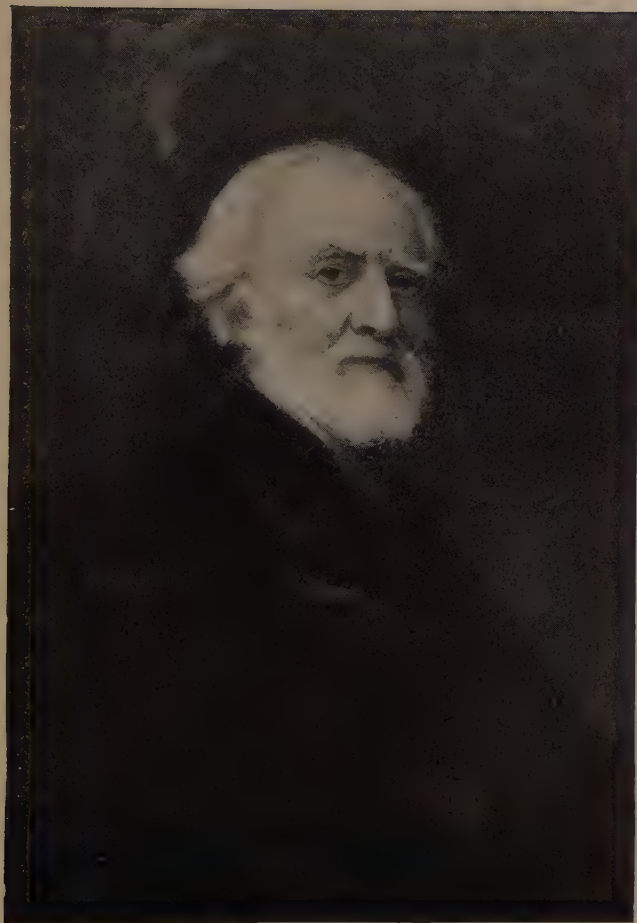
Crusades and was absent for ten years. When he at last returned his spouse threw open the nursery door and presented him with ten beautiful children, saying, "Behold, sire! I also have not been idle."

If, perhaps, the magazine is responsible for some thin places in my educational armour, at any rate it gave one some facility in composition, and in those days "letter-writing" as an art was considered of far more importance than it is nowadays. It may not be amusing to sit down and write, from cold-blooded dictation, in several foreign languages, an imaginary letter of thanks to an imaginary stepmother, thanking her for an imaginary birthday gift, with one of Madame de Sévigné's masterpieces as a model; but it is doubtless a good grounding as regards the amenities of correspondence.

We were four sisters. I, the eldest, my sister Marianna (afterwards Mrs. Edward Heron-Allen), my sister Amelia (now Mrs. Barry Pain), and my sister Alma (now Mrs. Charles Goetz). My mother had a fancy for dressing her four little girls all alike; and we were nicknamed "the girls with

the hair," on account of our long, fair manes. My father and mother were both fair, although I never knew my father except with snowy hair (he married at forty, but his hair began to turn white at twenty-four). Both my parents had *really* blue eyes, which I unfortunately only inherit with an admixture of grey. I was lately reading Mrs. Hugh Fraser's delightful book, *A Diplomatist's Wife in Rome*, wherein she speaks of my father's dark eyes; but I think she must have confused him with his brother Henri Lehmann, who afterwards settled in Paris, and was also an artist and a "Membre de l'Institut." The portrait of my father, reproduced here, is from a fine painting by Sir Hubert Herkomer, R.A., now in the possession of my sister, Mrs. Barry Pain. It was painted at Bushey, where my father spent the last few years of his life.

On Sunday mornings my father often took us for a walk, generally in Kensington Gardens, telling us fairy-tales as we wended our way through the Flower-walk or skirted the Round Pond. For us the single black swan among all the white swans was invari-



**RUDOLF LEHMANN**

*From a portrait by Sir Hubert Herkomer R.A.*



ably an enchanted prince, very sad and lonely. The story of Undine was another great favourite with us, not to speak of the "Five little Goatlings," and many other dimly remembered early friends and their familiars, including Puck, who has now, of course, abdicated in favour of Peter Pan, as every woman knows.

As we grew a little older, we were allowed to accompany our parents when they paid informal visits to the studios of artist friends, to view their Academy pictures in the early stages. Sometimes it would be to Lord (then Mr.) Leighton, President of the Royal Academy, whom my father had known since boyhood, and whose handsome head and supremely elegant bearing were well set off by the beautiful background of Leighton House. In those days he always called me "Lieschen"; and later on, when I sang at his renowned and rather "high-browed" musical parties, I was always "Lieschen" still.

Sometimes we would go to Sir John Millais—then still plain "Mr." Millais—with his genial voice and his rapturous dissertations upon Velasquez—his great

ideal. He too was very fond of music, and some years later I sang at the magnificent function given in honour of his baronetcy and which his friends facetiously dubbed the *Handle Festival*.

Sometimes it was to Val Prinsep that we went, or to Luke Fildes, or some other intimate; but I particularly remember many an inspiring visit to the "workshop" of Watts, who truly lived for his beloved art alone, rising in the small hours and leading the life of a recluse. His ideals seemed to shine in his thin, ascetic face, and to light his keen eyes with holy fire. I always think of him clad in a sort of holland overall, such as children wear, hanging loosely about his lean figure.

On one occasion we found him working upon a statue, and he took the trouble to explain to my mother and me how, in drawing the human figure, the apparently concave lines really consisted of a series of convex curves, illustrating his theme profusely with the most interesting diagrams. He had a great affection for my mother, and a great regard for her unerring instinct



in matters of art, often asking her criticism of his work whilst it was in progress.

My mother certainly had extraordinary gifts, but suffered all her life from quite abnormally developed diffidence. As a girl, she was so musical that her father declared she *did not require lessons* ! It was, therefore, not until after her marriage that she began to study music seriously. I have met most of the artists of my day, and I have never met any one so naturally gifted as my beloved mother. She had a lovely voice, and studied singing with several vocal teachers of renown; but she was never confident about her own achievements, and could hardly ever be induced to sing before any one. The few people who heard her sing have never forgotten her quite peculiar charm. She had a wonderful ear, the gift known as "absolute pitch," and could transpose easily at sight. She wrote some beautiful music, notably an operatic setting of a Goethe libretto; but the same diffidence and exaggerated, almost morbid self-criticism, led her to destroy most of her compositions, including with them many of her best.



However, she is known by a few songs that escaped the general fate, and by her arrange-



FROM A PEN-AND-INK CARICATURE OF A. L.  
BY LIZA LEHMANN

ments of many lovely old melodies, under her initials "A. L." I reproduce here a rather impertinent caricature of my mother



MRS. RUDOLF LEHMANN (A. L.)

*From a portrait by Rudolf Lehmann*



that I once sent to her. It is not that I am very pleased with it, but merely because she paid it the compliment of keeping it.

My father always said she would have made a great name as a pictorial artist, had she not given her best affections to music. I include a reproduction of one of her many delightful pen-and-ink drawings, which speaks for itself. These were frequently illustrations, with which her delightfully fluent and witty letters were interspersed or headed.

Looking back into the distant past, I can now see how my mother's passion for music led to difficulties in the home-life. My father, who was *not* musical, resented that his wife should give most of her time and thought to the development of a dormant gift, and—here was the crux—after all the hours devoted to study, could scarcely ever be induced to produce the results for the pleasure and entertainment of her large and clamorous circle of friends. My father would very naturally have enjoyed being proud of her, and her additional popular success would have been in a way a compensation for many sacrifices. And so it

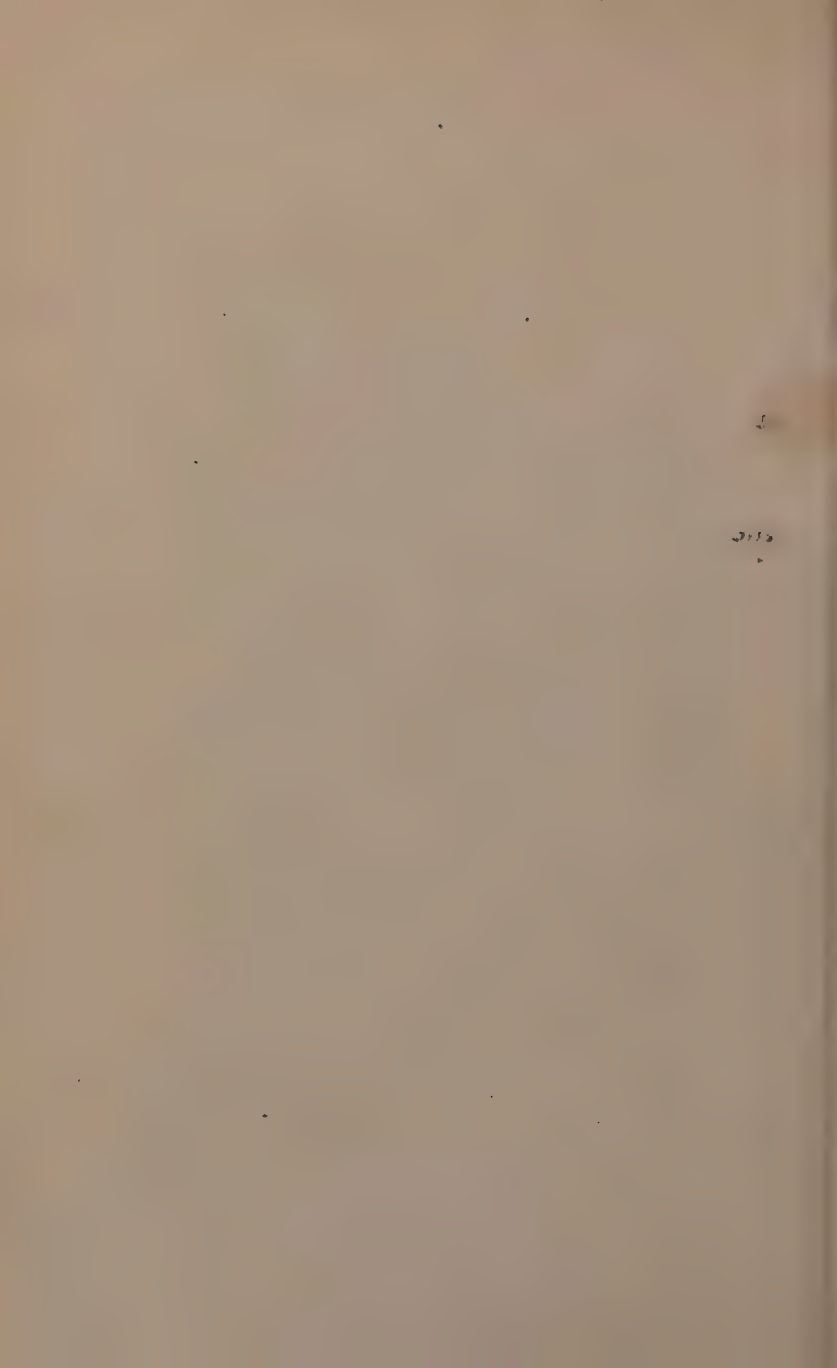
came about that there was often a little rift within the lute. The disparity in age, for my father was twenty years her senior, no doubt added to the *impasse*. I remember praying (ah, how ardently !) that they might be happier ; for a child notices so much more than it is supposed to !

But to continue. When my mother found that I had inherited her voice, or at any rate something of it, her one desire was that I should become a singer—a real live *professional* one, and realize what she herself had only dreamed of. She determined that I should, from my earliest years, become accustomed to sing before listeners. In fact, there was to be “no nonsense” about it ; and so I was trotted out frequently to break me in. In those very early days of which I have already spoken I did not mind ; but, as I grew towards girlhood, I found that, alas ! I had inherited my mother’s extreme nervousness. However, it was never allowed to get the upper hand ; and when I eventually sang in public, although I suffered agonies, I believe my audiences never knew it. Nevertheless, I often wish I had given to the study of composition



**"ON A BAT'S BACK"**

*From a pen-and-ink drawing by A. L.*





the years I devoted to the assiduous study of singing. I think that, by nature, I was more fitted for work in which one did not have *payer de sa personne*; but in those days women-composers were not thought of at all seriously. I remember my mother's

mazement when she read a glowing account in *The Times* of a composition by Maude Valérie White. She sent to England for the song (we were wintering in Italy at the time), which was called *My Soul is an Enchanted Boat*, and which had been sung by Miss Edith Santley at one of the Monday Popular Concerts then flourishing at St. James's Hall. I always had within me a yearning to write music, and even as a child had perpetrated little settings of verses. I think the very first was a setting of Shelley's *To the Moon*, beginning "Art thou pale for weariness?" and, as time went on, this yearning grew stronger and stronger until it could be gainsaid no longer, and I simply worshipped at the shrine of any woman who wrote music. Maude Valérie White, Marie Wurm, Chaminade — they seemed to me goddesses! However, I am anticipating again,

## CHAPTER III

Play-times—My First Concert—Early Impressions—Piano-forte Lessons—Jenny Lind—Italy again—A Dinner with Verdi—Amendola

PERHAPS I ought to dally a little longer with those childhood days when my sisters and I were still tormenting governesses and making No. 1, South Villas, a very lively abode indeed.

Our house almost faced the grounds of the stately and beautiful house belonging to Mr. Arthur Lewis, whose wife had been so well known on the stage as Kate Terry. They were intimate friends of my parents, and as their family consisted, like ours, of four little girls, we became playmates, and many a good time we had in their large garden.

The Countess of Airlie, with yet another fine garden, lived close by, and we used often to go there to play with her youngest daughter, then Lady Griselda Ogilvie. She



LIZA LEHMANN, 1880

*From a portrait by Rudolf Lehmann*



was rather more muscular than I, and in her favourite game of "Police," I was generally cast for the part of the criminal, whilst she planted herself firmly on my chest with the full weight of the representative of the law.

Among our young friends were also the three daughters of Alfred Hunt, the landscape painter, of whom the eldest, Violet, is now a well-known novelist.

After tea and lessons were done with for the day, one of our joys was to go down to the drawing-room and improvise more or less poetic dances while mamma played dreamy music on the piano. Later, dancing lessons were naturally included in our curriculum, but we never enjoyed these half as much.

Sometimes, too, I used to pose my sisters in fantastic tableaux, and, calling papa and mamma in as the audience, would improvise incidental music with extempore words and phrases that suited the subjects.

My sister Amelia had genuine dramatic talent. Sir John Hare saw her act in some private theatricals when she was about fifteen, and promptly offered her the part

of Lucy in *Home*. She never felt drawn to adopt the stage as a profession, but her gift is a delight to her many admiring friends to this day. Her imitations of Sarah Bernhardt and other stage stars, and her skits on private theatricals, etc., have given acute joy to many, whilst her Natural History lecture on the Ant, and a mock singing-lesson, given with a strong foreign accent to me (as a very stupid pupil who ended by having the music hurled at her head), were much in request.

Among the great events of our early years were the Christmas parties. Christmas-trees were not in my youth as generally seen in this country as they are to-day, but we always had one at home. In fact, so indispensable was it considered that one December, when my mother had taken me for a few days to Brighton, where I had promptly caught scarlet fever (I have had this three times!), thus laying me up during Christmas, my father brought down a little tree from London, all ready decorated, and in a case built specially to fit it!

It was at Brighton, by the way, that I was taken to my first concert, at the

Aquarium, and heard Madame Patey sing Smart's *Be thou patient*. I thought I was in heaven, and registered a vow then and there that I too would be a singer !

Our summer holidays were generally spent at the seaside, where we were allowed to run wild. Blackberrying and shrimping were great joys, and I still remember the feel of the frisky little shrimps slipping in and out among my bare toes in the shallow, warm pools, and the excitement of trying to reach almost inaccessible blackberries, regardless of thorns.

Talking of thorns brings to my mind the deep impression made upon me by Gustave Doré's illustrations for *La belle au bois dormant* (The Sleeping Beauty). I only saw the book—a very big volume—once, and I am not sure where, nor have I ever been able to trace it ; but the vision of the fantastic tangle of overgrowth depicted in its pages haunts me still. I can only compare the hold it took upon my imagination to a similar *coup de foudre* which I experienced years ago on first seeing Atkinson Grimshaw's exquisite painting, *Dame Autumn hath a Mournful Face*, represent-



ing a semi-transparent fairy figure, mistily draped and with gossamer wings, floating like a mirage against russet-brown foliage. It has ever remained one of my favourite pictures. It belonged to my uncle, Frederic Lehmann, a great art-lover and art-collector in his day ; and is now in the possession of his son, R. C. Lehmann, the well-known authority on rowing, and member of the *Punch* staff. By the way, his sister, my dear cousin Nina (Lady Campbell), has done much to assist the movement for promoting the welfare of children in connection with the Parents' National Educational Union.

The only school-room lessons that we really loved were the lessons in mythology, and so fired were we with the old myths that I remember, one summer at Folkestone, devising an altar to Venus under the muslin draperies of a lodging-house toilet-table. Our rites were very poetic ; but unfortunately a Scotch friend of my mother's discovered them, and was so shocked that they were at once interdicted. As a wind-up to Paganism, we covered a large flat stone with hieroglyphics and buried it

in the back garden, where no doubt it reposes to this day, unless somebody has dug it up and presented it to the local Museum !

When we grew a little older, we were often taken to the Continent to improve our languages. The Channel crossing was always my *bête noire*, as I am quite the worst sailor in the world—worse even, I am sure, than the lady who vowed that she required a stewardess *if she saw a sailor in the street !*

My father, who was anxious that I should become a painter, encouraged the sketch-book habit, and was very irate if I travelled with my eyes glued to a novel instead of jotting down effects of sunset or of Alpine scenery. For a short season I actually attended classes at South Kensington, drew from casts, and had private lessons in perspective. I include an example of my early drawings, a sleeping fay on a lily, which possibly may show some feeling for line, and what the French call “*le sentiment de la pose.*” But, as with my mother, music lured me the more strongly.

My pianoforte lessons, however, were a

source of pure misery to me at this time—in fact, I was given up by one of my first teachers, dear old Henry Bird, as a hopeless case. In after years at how many, many classical concerts have I not sung to his sympathetic accompaniment! But piano technique did not interest me until my imagination was appealed to. As it fell out, the day I was pronounced “hopeless” my parents were dining out, and my father happened to sit next to the well-known pianist and teacher, Madame Alma Haas. To her he unburdened his parent’s chagrin, and she sympathetically offered to hear me. A last chance! My mother cast aside the careworn copies of Clementi and the like, with which I had been wrestling for months, and instead taught me a romantic little piece by Schumann. On the appointed day we presented ourselves for the ordeal. Madame Haas made me play the Schumann piece twice, and then I heard her slow dictum, and the Delphic oracle was never listened to with keener anxiety: “No—I should not call her unmusical.”

Madame Haas agreed thereupon to try me as a pupil, and this was the turning-



SLEEPING FAY ON A LILY

*From a pen-and-ink sketch by Liza Lehmann*

25  
20  
15  
10  
5

point in my career. Thenceforward, every Saturday morning I flew to my lesson, borne on the wings of enthusiasm. All the rest of the week I slaved for it; I even revelled in the intricacies of Bach! But she taught me something that I have never forgotten: she taught me to think poems and pictures into the music, and I can never be sufficiently grateful to her.

I had begun to play the piano really quite well by the time I was old enough to start vocal training; and then, alas! I was no longer allowed to spend hours at the piano, for unfortunately nothing is more unfavourable for vocal development than the position of sitting with the arms forward, as one has them in playing.

About this time, just as I was stepping from childhood to girlhood, my dear mother's health began to fail, and it was decided that she must winter abroad for the next few years. I, as the eldest daughter, was to be her companion; and so it was in Cimiez, Nice, and Cannes that my vocal studies commenced in earnest, my mother herself undertaking my tuition.

When we returned to England in the

spring she took me to sing to Madame Goldschmidt (Jenny Lind). Madame Goldschmidt said that my mother had done so well with me that, while she would not like to take me away from her, she would like to help me ; and that I could always be present at her classes when I was in London. She had at this time accepted a professorship at the Royal College of Music, but on the condition that she might teach at her own house in South Kensington. These classes were, of course, of supreme interest to a student of singing ; but although there were many good voices to be heard then, there was apparently, during the few years that her health permitted her to teach, no great talent worthy of such a teacher. She was always wonderfully kind to my humble self, but sometimes treated certain of her pupils with almost cruel harshness and sarcasm. No doubt her musical nerves were strained almost to breaking-point—in fact, looking back, I cannot imagine how she could tolerate any of us—but, curiously enough, I believe she *loved* teaching. Her manner in ordinary life at that time was far removed from



what would be called affable. A stern and unrelenting kind of Puritanism seemed to emanate from her personality. She was deeply religious—almost to the point of bigotry. I remember on one occasion when my mother and I were having tea with her, an innocent-looking little Italian button-boy brought in the muffins; and when he had left the room, she turned to us and in a tense voice said, “You see that boy? I am trying to conquer myself—to *bear* with him—but—*he is a Roman Catholic!*”

Ah! but when she sang all harshness vanished, and her face became illuminated and suffused with lofty tenderness, as if inspired by St. Cecilia herself. Tears sprang to one's eyes for the sheer beauty of her voice, the *idealism* in the tone, and the mind and soul behind the delivery. Hers was an artistry based upon relentless study, but her voice was the most spiritual I have ever heard. It had a soaring quality, and, although brilliant and powerful, her *pianissimo* was so extraordinary that it seemed to creep up to one and touch one. Then her long-drawn shakes, “linkèd sweetness long drawn out,” and the marvels of the intricate

*cadenze* composed by herself ! She seemed to triumph in proving the infallibility of her *ear* as well as the dexterity of her voice. She used to say, " Very few people sing really in tune."

Once she made me put my hand on her chest to note her power of breath-control. It was phenomenal, and her chest seemed to me like an iron safe. I wonder if she realized how her every note and every word were sinking into the heart and brain of at any rate one little " flapper " among the students, and creating for her a standard nothing could ever efface ?

I was not very robust, but I was full of ambition, and cheerfully gave up all the more usual pleasures of youth for the sake of study. For instance, I never went to a dance in my life except as a spectator. Looking back, I think I suffered from an exaggerated sense of sacrifice to my art. But, in spite of ambition, Nature's limitations cannot be overstepped, and I very soon realized that I should never have sufficient physical strength and endurance for an operatic career. Everything seemed to point to a concert career ; and my voice, a light

lyric soprano, small at first, grew steadily till eventually I was able to fill any concert hall without effort.

So passed the first years of study. In the autumn we flitted South with the swallows ; and in the spring we came home to London. And then, one winter, my father, having grown weary of the continual breaking-up of the family circle, decided to give up our charming house at Campden Hill, so that we might all winter abroad together. Accordingly we spent one winter in Rome and the next in Pegli, near Genoa. At Pegli we were lucky enough to rent a lovely villa hidden in the most enchanting garden I have ever beheld. It was planned so that at every turn some statue, or group of statuary, came into view among the greenery—the figure of Diana and her hounds ; Leda and the Swan by a shady pool ; nymphs, fauns, satyrs, and all manner of gods and goddesses. It was a veritable Paradise to me, for I have always *adored* sculpture, and, curiously enough, sculptors have often been attracted to me. Two of them went so far as to propose. I have always re-

garded this as a triumph of mind over matter, seeing how far from classical were my features.

I must not forget to describe an evening we spent with Verdi while we were in the neighbourhood of Genoa. My father had obtained from the composer Hiller, his most intimate friend, a letter of introduction to Verdi, as he wished to add the veteran composer's portrait to the collection of drawings of celebrities, signed by themselves, on which he was then at work, and which, after my father's death, was purchased by the British Museum. Verdi granted the necessary sittings, and kindly invited us all to dinner. There were present only Verdi and his wife, Arrigo Boito, and ourselves. It was a very delightful and memorable evening, and Signora Verdi's dinner was quite a *tour de force*. I remember that the fish was about a yard long, served whole, and decked all down its spine with red camellias! Verdi was amused to find that we English girls drank no wine. "Why not?" he queried. "Don't you like it? What effect has it on you?" and how he *roared* when my sister Alma

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answered : "*Mi fa freddo nel dosso*"  
(It makes me cold down the back).

After the gorgeous repast Verdi took us into his bedroom, a cosy little apartment hung with green rep curtains, where he kept his piano hidden. He explained to us that he was so tormented with people who wanted to sing to him or to play to him that he was driven to this device ! He insisted, however, that I must sing to him, and, after much pressure, I reluctantly did so ; and I hope exercised discretion in that I made no attempt at his own florid music, but merely confined myself to a few old Scotch songs which he had never heard, and which seemed to interest him greatly.

But to go back to the previous winter, spent in Rome. It was there that I made my first little attempt at public singing, at a big function given by the Artists' Club in aid of some charity. It was a costume affair, and I wore a little Empire gown of white satin, trimmed with pink crêpe and roses, and an enormous poke bonnet which, I am sure, must have absorbed a good deal of my voice. However, luckily all went well, and a short man with a genial smile

was the first to rush up and congratulate me. This turned out to be Paolo Tosti.

Among many interesting acquaintances made that winter, I was so fortunate as to number the Countess Gigliucci (Clara Novello), renowned for the purity of her voice and style, notably an oratorio singer. She was kind enough to give me many valuable hints, and when, a few years later, I sang for the first time at the Crystal Palace under August Manns, he gratified me by saying that I reminded him of her.

During our peregrinations abroad, I was often put to straits in hotels or apartments through being unable to practise freely. I remember once being reduced to having a piano placed in a stable-loft; and at Capri, where we spent an idyllic spring, we hired a practice-room in a fisherman's cottage! It was quite a poor little place, but the fisherman's wife had the soul of a poet, and every day I found the white-washed walls hung with garlands of fresh roses.

On the way to Capri we had stayed at Naples, but only long enough to visit the studio and home of a gifted young sculptor,

G. B. Amendola, whose work had created quite a vogue in London. He executed a charming statuette of my mother, and a life-sized bust of my humble self that I should have liked to reproduce here, if only because it was much admired by sculptors in London. Amendola became one of our most intimate friends, and he was quite the most poetic artist I have ever known.

"Alas that spring should vanish with the rose,  
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!"

With that strange, self-deluding hopefulness that characterizes the victims of consumption, he did not realize his precarious state; but the shadow of an early death already brooded over him.



## CHAPTER IV

Studies in Composition—We return to London—A Rubinstein Party—Randegger—On Tact—My Career as Singer

**D**URING the winter in Rome I had my first lessons in composition from Raunkilde, a charming old Dane ; and the following year, when we were in Wiesbaden, where I had to undergo a somewhat drastic treatment for catarrh, compelling me to abandon my singing studies for a time, I did quite a lot of hard ground-work at musical theory with a rather pompous professor, Herr Freudenberg. I covered several reams of manuscript paper with every variety of bothering inversions, etc., and also, by way of contrast, wrote the first song that I ever published—a deplorable setting of some stanzas by Tom Moore. I am so ashamed of it that I will not even mention its title. It still occasionally rears its disagreeable little head in its publisher's royalty accounts, and brings a blush of shame to my cheek. My only excuse for it is—youth !

When we returned to London, my mother's health having improved sufficiently to make wintering abroad no longer an imperative necessity, my father took a house in Cromwell Road—that never-ending and drearily respectable Kensington thoroughfare; but, in spite of its excellent music-room, we did not like it very much, and soon moved to 28, Abercorn Place, St. John's Wood, a charming house with a fine studio, where I lived until I abandoned my career as a singer, became human, and married.

It was at Abercorn Place that we saw a good deal of Bret Harte, who lived in the same neighbourhood, and who formed the habit of dropping in to tea on Sundays. I remember that he affected very tight patent leather shoes, but they in no way interfered with the brilliant banter he exchanged with my mother, who never failed in repartee.

An incident occurred while we were still in Cromwell Road, by which I shall always remember that house. My parents gave one of their celebrated music parties, of which Rubinstein, an old friend of theirs,

was to be the bright particular star. Stanley, of *Darkest Africa*, was also present, rather smileless, but paying much attention to a pretty widow ; and the ill-starred Oscar Wilde, then at the height of his popularity, was among the guests.

After dinner Rubinstein played divinely, and several distinguished singers of the day sang. Then, by a kindly meant, but evil inspiration, Rubinstein, who knew I had been studying, asked me to sing ! Knowing perfectly well, as I did, that I was still far from being ready for such an ordeal before the cream of artistic London, and prompted by my mother, who, seized with panic, whispered something to the effect of, “ *Refuse—and don’t give way !* ” I *did* refuse, with such grace as I could muster. Poor Papa ! It was too much for him ! I suppose he thought it was going to be a case of my mother’s lack of courage all over again with me—all study and no results—and instantly he made up his mind to make a firm stand. In an ominous undertone he declared : “ *Unless you sing, I go to bed.* ” This was, of course, in an *aside* to me, and it never entered our heads

that he would dream of carrying out his threat and leave his guests. But as I, quite limp by now, still hung back I suppose he thought that, having threatened me, he must act up to it ; so he left the room and walked upstairs ! The bulk of our guests knew nothing, happily, of the tragi-comedy being enacted, and the buzz of a successful soirée went on without intermission in the big drawing-room. Our dear old friend, the Russian singer, Raimond Von zur Mühlen, offered to act as intermediary, and, with characteristic enthusiasm, rushed upstairs in the hope of inducing the head of the house to relent. He was followed as far as the hall by myself and a small coterie of intimates who had got an inkling of what was in the wind ; and who, at the foot of the staircase, awaited Von zur Mühlen's breathless bulletins from the upper region.

This is how it went :

Voice of R. v. z. Mühlen from above,  
in a stage whisper :

*Espressivo :*

“ He will not listen—he takes off  
his coat.”

*Più espressivo* : "Now he takes off his waistcoat !"

*Crescendo* : "He takes off his collar !"

*Molto crescendo* : "Now he takes off his pantaloons !"

*Doloroso* : "He puts on his pyjamas."

*Desperato* : "He is going to get into bed !"

*Sgridato* : "HE IS IN BED !"

I can still hear dear Maude Valérie White's yells of laughter punctuating the messages, and her wild shriek as the climax was reached.

Rubinstein, by the way, had an entertaining craze for giving Sunday picnic-parties, wonderfully lavish affairs, when as many as thirty of his friends would be driven to Richmond, Virginia Water, or some other such beautiful place within driving distance of London, and there regaled in princely fashion, or even in Russian-princely fashion. Among the habitués of these entertainments was one family whose wealth was a rather recent acquisition, and who always caused great amusement by bringing a huge trunk and a lady's-

maid, and changing into more elaborate clothes half-way through the function!

At about this period of my studies my mother thought that some lessons from an Italian maestro would be useful, and she took me to Signor Randegger. He was a splendid coach, clearness of diction being a special feature of his teaching, while his knowledge of musical tradition was singularly complete. He had a most generous nature, and was a loyal friend, but very outspoken, somewhat on the principle of the Frenchman who said: "*Je suis votre ami. S'il y a quelque chose de désagréable à dire, comptez sur moi!*"

When I made my formal début at one of the Monday Popular Concerts, despite my agonising nervousness, the public received me with great kindness, and, in congratulating me afterwards, Signor Randegger said: "My dear, *I did not expect it!* But there are two sorts of singers—some are worse before the public, and some are better—you are better!"

From this time onward I became very busy as a singer. I continued to take lessons from dear old Randegger from time

to time, during all the nine years that I sang in public, but my mother's criticism was my great stand-by to the end. She was not only desperately critical, but her criticisms on all matters connected with singing and with the interpretation of songs were always *right*. One word of praise from her was worth everything to me, and no plaudits of the public could console me if I failed to satisfy her standards. I have sometimes come home after a concert, after meeting with a rapturous reception from an audience too easily pleased, to find my mother (who had returned before me) sitting up to receive me with : " Well, if that's the way you are going to sing, my advice is—*give it up!* " Severe, perhaps, but salutary—like a cold bath in December.

Although she termed herself the *Brutal truth department*, all singers simply loved her, and tumbled over each other to obtain her advice and help. She never taught professionally, but helped many a beginner to a successful career. Though naturally of an impatient temperament, she exercised a perfectly phenomenal patience when



teaching. Moreover, she possessed the priceless gift of tact, without which so many other gifts may become merely as Dead Sea fruit. Indeed, my experience of life shows me that lack of tact can break any friendship !

The mention of tact brings me to a momentary digression, for the sake of the following story ; perhaps it is a " chest-nut " ; but, if so, kindly skip it.

An aspiring young diplomat was being questioned as to his suitability for some position within the gift of the Foreign Office. Asked to state his experience and qualifications, he said :

" I have no experience ; but, as to qualifications, I have, sir, the priceless gift of tact. Allow me to give you an example. Last week-end I was stopping at a country house, and, when I went into the bathroom, imagine my discomfiture at finding a lady already in the bath ! She had forgotten to lock the door. Did I lose my head ? I did nothing of the kind. I merely bowed and said, ' Sorry, sir,' and vanished."

History does not relate whether the



Foreign Office was sufficiently impressed to employ this valuable youth.

In illustration of another kind of tact—that which is swift to retrieve a *faux pas*—I think the following that I overheard at a *soirée* at the Rubinstein Club in New York ranks high :

He : “ Say, look at that old Guy Fawkes in pink satin with a paroquet in her hair ! ”

She (*frigidly*) : “ That is my mother.”

He (*roaring*) : “ Ha, ha, ha ! is that so ? But you should just see *mine* ! ! ! ”

However, to resume. Apart from constantly appearing at the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts, I travelled all over the United Kingdom fulfilling engagements, and in the London season was very much engaged for private parties. I was never over-fond of singing at these, as I found the hot rooms and late hours very trying indeed. Monsieur and Madame Jacques Blumenthal's drawing-room was particularly difficult to sing in, owing to a pair of antique yellow satin curtains, heavily padded; which hung just behind the piano. I have often wished them at the bottom

of the sea—together with the clusters of strongly scented white lilies which decorated many a smart drawing-room, and which I always found so injurious to the voice.

I loved singing in Oratorio, and I have specially pleasant memories of two of the Norwich musical festivals. I was lucky enough to make a "hit" at one of them in spite of a frightful cold in the head; and it was my first appearance in sacred music.

I remember Mr. Leo Frank Schuster, who had evidently heard of my plight, sending me a huge bouquet of *Belladonna* blossoms, which was handed up to me after my chief solo.

Smaller festivals, but fraught with growing significance, that I frequently had the pleasure of singing at, were those at Kendal, Westmorland, first known as the "Kendal Competitions," founded by Mary Wakefield. Her genial enthusiasm created a delightfully stimulating atmosphere there, and it was at her father's residence in Westmorland that I first met the Countess of Bective, who became one of my kindest and most beloved friends.

I also appeared at Novello Oratorio Concerts ; the Crystal Palace Orchestral Concerts, under August Manns's enthusiastic conductorship ; at the London Philharmonic Concerts, the London Ballad Concerts, and many others, including, of course, my own recitals.

A day on which I felt much honoured was that on which Joseph Joachim engaged me for the Berlin Philharmonic for a concert conducted by himself. I gladly faced the long journey there : for Joseph Joachim was as kindly as he was great. His presence was never alarming—on the contrary, he seemed to have the quality that belongs to some great people of drawing out the best in others, however inexperienced.

I remember once he was present when I sang a little song which required a perfectly simple ending—entirely without *rallentando* or ornament of any kind, and he came up to me and said, “ Ah ! I see you understand the effect of *non-effect*.” As a matter of fact, I had made the point quite instinctively and unconsciously on that occasion ; but, no doubt, though I had no ready answer,

I tried to look intelligent ! And in later days I have often realized what he meant.

Sir Charles Hallé and Madame Norman Neruda (afterwards Lady Hallé) were particularly kind to me, and I also received frequent engagements through Sir Charles Stanford for the Brahms *Requiem* and other classical works. But Mr. Arthur Chappell, the genial director of the " Pops," "dear Uncle Arthur" as everybody called him, was my greatest patron of all. I had a genuine affection for him, and I loved to sing at his concerts in preference to all others.

My heart used to jump for joy at sight of his well-known handwriting asking me to be the singer on perhaps some especially interesting occasion ; and I used to take great trouble to find something unhackneyed to bring out—often some forgotten old English gem by Purcell, Arne, Hook, etc. My mother had many folios of such treasures, which she had collected, and, following in her footsteps, I often spent hours at the British Museum, looking through scores, mostly just the voice part with a figured bass, and copying out any-

thing I thought might prove suitable. Many of these songs were arranged by "A. L.," and some became very popular when published; but I made it a rule never to accept royalties for singing any song.

One of our "finds" in the British Museum, an old French *chanson*, *La charmante Marguerite*, became a particular favourite, and eventually quite a nightmare to me, for I was asked for it so repeatedly, and I had to sing it so often, that at last I began to forget the words!

## CHAPTER V

In the Artists' Room—Superstitions—Lillian Nordica—Clara Schumann—Johannes Brahms—Robert Browning—The Pig Book—George du Maurier—Ménie Muriel Dowie—Visit to Bayreuth

ONE of the minor trials of a public singer is the long period of waiting in the artists' room (*artists' cage* I used to call it) between, say, two appearances in a programme. Sometimes this may mean an interval of quite a couple of hours, during which time one cannot settle to any other occupation; and not infrequently artists of a certain kind while away the weary hours in vapid gossip, or in describing their latest vocal fads to each other. And there is probably no other profession in which the success of a newcomer is so quickly and mercilessly analysed, possibly quite wrongly, and attributed to the special idiosyncrasies of this or that new teacher.

Imagine this as a little example :

Prima donna (weighing 15 stone) : "My dear, have you noticed how thin I have got?"

(one had not noticed anything of the kind).

"Pickled walnuts, my dear ; there's nothing like them !"

Or :

Popular tenor : "Tell me, *when* did you last hear me ? About a year ago ? Ha, you wouldn't *know* my voice now. Listen to this ! (You may imagine a succession of weird sounds, the veins of his neck and face standing out like whipcord.) "Not bad for a B natural, eh ? Carry anywhere, and without effort !" (*Retires breezily to use his latest infallible gargle.*)

And so on, and so on.

Perhaps a sense of humour saved me from some follies ; but, like all public performers who live on their nerves, I had my pet puerilities, and I think a decided leaning towards superstition was one of them. Possibly my Highland ancestry is partly responsible, and the fact of my having lived so much in Italy, that hotbed of superstition, tended to foster this weakness. Although I was never such a slave to superstition as the Roman *prima donna* who went to the length of never singing



LIZA LEHMANN, 1894

*From a photograph by Elliott & Fry*





without a mascot in the shape of a bunch of rusty iron nails in her bosom (how comfortable!), I was nevertheless convinced that Friday was my luckiest day, and Tuesday the unluckiest. I hated spilling salt, and to this day I can never see glass broken without pouring wine over the fragments to propitiate the gods!

In my singing-days I also had my favourite colours, and used to don them with a feeling of confidence. For instance, I found a gown of myrtle green speckled with gold exercised a distinctly benign influence; a rainbow chiffon trimmed with crystals constituted a very firm prop; and a certain creation in flamingo net could be relied on to see me through any emergency.

On the other hand, I came to the conclusion (owing to a succession of preposterous accidents) that a certain quaint eighteenth-century brooch of amethyst and paste, which opened in the middle to form a receptacle for my lady's patches, exerted a decidedly *malign* influence. I had found it in an old curiosity shop in Rome, and took a great fancy to it; but it really

seemed that every time I wore it I either fell downstairs, was thrown out of a cab, or damaged in some other disagreeable way ; so I finally cast it from me feeling—oh, degrading admission !—that of course it was all nonsense, *but none the less there was something in it !*

Perhaps a psychometrist could have explained.

A great singer who became one of our intimate friends was the American soprano, Lillian Nordica—then in the prime of her voice and beauty. What a worker she was ! I shall never forget her capacity for unremitting study. She used sometimes to say, “ Oh, do come along to-morrow morning, Liza, and let us practise together ”—and so we did, many and many a time, and to my great advantage. Her whole heart was in her music ; and, although she loved the pleasures of life, they always came second to her art.

She once gave a dinner-party at her London house, and invited a number of smart and distinguished people to whom she wanted to show some politeness. We were asked with a view, possibly, to helping

her through. When the dinner-hour came the guests duly assembled ; but, instead of the hostess being there waiting to receive us in orthodox fashion, we all had to wait a very long while before the Diva—radiantly beautiful when she *did* come—at last appeared. I don't think she even made much attempt at apology, and for the Divinities allowances are readily made ; but at the end of the evening, after everybody but ourselves had left, she just sank down upon a sofa with the words, “ I *despise* entertaining ! ”

Hearing me on one of her visits to London, Madame Clara Schumann took a fancy to my singing, and at quite an early stage of my career invited me to stay with her in Frankfort, where she most kindly offered to impart to me the tradition of her husband's songs. I had already so many concert engagements that I could go only for three weeks ; but during those three weeks she gave me a lesson every day in those wonderful *Lieder* only too little heard at London concerts nowadays.

While I was there Johannes Brahms came on a visit for a few days ; but he

took no interest whatever in the "English Miss," which was his way of referring to me, and my charming hostess was quite offended with him because he never asked to hear me sing. I was very thankful ; for, truth to tell, his rather bluff and coarse manners made me shrink into my shell ; and when, one morning at breakfast, he gobbled up a whole tin of sardines and made assurance doubly sure by drinking the oil from the tin at a draught, he, so to say, finished *me* off as well as the sardines !

Before I left Frankfort Madame Schumann issued invitations for a musical party, at which she herself proposed to play my accompaniments. This was not only a great honour for me, but also a complete joy ; for those who have heard her caressing touch upon the keyboard can easily imagine the delight of singing to her accompaniment. Naturally, my little war-horse, *La charmante Marguerite*, had to be one of my songs even there ; and I remember how Madame Schumann carried off the copy several days before the reception, in order, as she said, *that she might practise it*.

With what gratitude have I often thought

since of her modesty and conscientiousness, when I have had to contend with some villainously played accompaniment ! I have always noticed that, the worse the accompanist, the more he or she have *resented* being asked to rehearse, or even to look through the accompaniment before a concert.

By the way, I remember that after Madame Schumann's invitations had been out a few days, she mentioned to me the number of acceptances ; and I guilelessly asked, " And how many refusals ? "

" We never have refusals," was the reply ! She was a prophetess even in her own country.

Whilst on the subject of receptions—and looking back to those days I seem to see a seething ocean of " parties " !—I must not forget to tell about a very interesting function which took place one evening in my father's studio at Abercorn Place. The occasion was a reception given to introduce Mr. Edison and his newly invented phonograph (the father, or grandfather, perhaps, of our ubiquitous gramophone) to our friend, Robert Browning, in the hope

of inducing him to recite into it. And Browning, deeply interested, and ever obliging, *did* recite, choosing his poem *How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*. We all stood round to see and to hear. Perhaps it was the apparent irresponsiveness of the instrument that upset him ; but, whether for that or some other reason, when he got half-way through he faltered—memory failed—and he stopped ! I can still see Browning standing in the middle of the circle, flanked by Edison and his very American secretary ; and, when he finally halted, I can hear him exclaiming, “ God bless my soul, I’ve forgotten it ! ” Luckily an enthusiast was ready with the missing word (it was Mr. Fitzmaurice Kelly, the author of the *Life of Cervantes*), and the rescued poet was able to proceed to the end.

My father had a most amusing little album called “ The Pig Book ” in which he asked many of his artist friends to draw a pig. This had to be done with eyes blind-folded, and then autographed ; and I am sorry that it is impossible for me to reproduce here a few of the types of



piggery therein contained ; but discretion forbids.

Among the contributors were numbered many of my father's intimates, such as Lord Leighton, Sir John Millais, Sir William Richmond, Walter Crane, Sir Hubert Herkomer, Boughton, Abbey, Marcus Stone, Sir Laurence Alma-Tadema, Charles Keene, and George du Maurier.

George du Maurier, by the bye, was also very musical, and sang delightfully ; but the music of a past age claimed all his affections. I remember my mother telling me that after he heard a performance of my song-cycle *In a Persian Garden*, he said to her : " I have no doubt it is very clever—but I confess it is too *modern* for me—I cannot follow it ! "

However, I am anticipating again, for the *Persian Garden* was not yet written in those earlier days with which I am now concerned.

In spite of being so fully launched in the busy life of a professional vocalist, I managed to find time for further study of composition under Hamish MacCunn. He married my friend Allison Pettie, daughter



of the R.A. I occasionally wrote some small song—always wishing I had more leisure to give to this branch of music—in fact *longing* to compose. One autumn I caught a severe attack of influenza, and entirely lost my voice for a time. I was ordered to throw up all my engagements and take a complete rest for at least six months, if possible in a warm climate. The doctor's dictum was a terrible blow to me, but a kind old friend, hearing of this, promptly invited me to spend the winter with her in Rome, where she had a charming flat. So off I went for the first lengthy holiday that I had had for about eight years, travelling by easy stages with my cousin Ménie Muriel Dowie (author of *A Girl in the Carpathians*) for my travelling companion. It was a stroke of luck for me that she happened also to be going south, as her witty conversation and sympathetic companionship would have made even a longer journey seem short.

How I enjoyed my enforced holiday, and the freedom from responsibilities and the absence of nervous strain connected with constant public appearances !

As this is a human document I will just add that an unhappy youthful romance had for some years before this time clouded my natural cheerfulness. It had been a case of love at first sight ; but, owing to considerations of which I was compelled to admit the weight, my parents would not consent to our marriage. However, youth is elastic, and few wounds are beyond the power of time to heal.

Journeying from Rome, I joined my cousin Nina, Lady Campbell, and together we paid our first visit to a Richard Wagner Festival at Bayreuth, a great event in the life of any musician, or of anybody sensitive to the effect of music in something approaching ideal surroundings.

I am bound to confess that, notwithstanding the glamour of his dazzling and dominant genius, much of Wagner's music affects me in a somewhat peculiar manner. Some quality inherent to it—I am not sure I should be wrong in describing it as an overwhelming sensuality—leaves me, however much I may have been carried away at the moment, with a sense of mental nausea. This is notably the case with his great love-drama,

*Tristan und Isolde*. It is not that I am such a prude that the illicit passion of the unhappy lovers upsets my moral equilibrium ; indeed, the strains of Debussy's *Pelleas and Melisande*, a somewhat kindred subject, do not affect me in the same way at all. No ; I think the composer's innermost ego must in some subtle manner have permeated his music ; and perhaps my Psyche—I have been called a “ natural hypersensitive ”—unconsciously recognizes and recoils from the character of Richard Wagner the *man*, calculating, selfish, and sensual to the highest degree, as all the world knows only too well from his biography and memoirs.

It is, of course, quite unimportant whether I happen to recoil or not, and this is a mere digression.

By the autumn of that year, my health and voice being then quite restored, I once more returned to London, and was very soon engulfed again in the maelstrom of a singer's career. But the idea had begun to germinate in my mind that perhaps after all a singer's life was not really suited to my temperament, and I sometimes felt half

inclined to give it up. And then, whilst I hesitated on the brink, Fate took the matter out of my hands, for I met my future husband—and when we married I retired into private life and abandoned my career without a sigh of regret.

## CHAPTER VI

My Marriage—Life at Pinner—Pampered Pets—I compose  
“In a Persian Garden”—Pinner Neighbours

I WAS married to Herbert Bedford on October 10th, 1894, at St. Mark's Church in Hamilton Terrace, where my mother also had been married.

My husband was a son of Deputy J. T. Bedford, a well-known member of the City of London Corporation, and a constant contributor to *Punch* under the nom-de-plume of “Robert, the City Waiter.” He devoted some fifteen years of his career as a public man to the saving of Epping Forest for the people, and the “Bedford Oak” there still commemorates his name.

My husband was an artist born, highly gifted both for painting and music, particularly for orchestral music. Art being condemned as precarious, he went into the city to woo the goddess of commerce. He had very little to say to her, and at the time of our marriage all his leisure hours



HERBERT BEDFORD, 1918

*From a photograph by L. H. B.*



were given to art. We were fortunate in having every taste in common.

I may say here that his critical faculty is extraordinary, and, as regards composition, I have certainly learnt as much, if not more, from him than from any other source.

We built our first nest at a dear little cottage called "Nascot" at Pinner, in Middlesex. It was a darling toy house with clipped yew-trees at the gate and a delicious orchard all round it. We had decided that, after my busy life, it would be delightful to have country air and quiet—and so it was. Unfortunately, after a couple of years of the good clay of Pinner, my husband developed an affection of the eyes, and we were ordered to return to London. Thither we duly repaired; but no sooner had my husband recovered, than his Satanic Majesty arranged that *I* should be taken ill, presenting me with a chill on a nerve, which resulted in facial paralysis—luckily only partial and temporary.

But this singularly uncomfortable state of things lasted for some months, and permanently lamed the muscles on one side of my throat, definitely putting an end



to the singing which I had until then maintained, if not at absolute concert-pitch, at least in good working order "for home consumption."

The first two years of my married life were spent in dear little Pinner, and perhaps they were the happiest years I have ever known. I *loved* the simple life we led there. I had no heavier duties than that of combing the fur of a lovely Angora cat, one of our most acceptable wedding presents, and of keeping house for a husband who was pleased with anything and everything—he even forgave the home-made teacake on which he broke an eye-tooth!

A love of cats, by the way, is in our family—(on the "distaff" side only, for my father detested them)—and we all adore them. From ancient Egypt to Scotland is a far cry; but I sometimes think some ancestor must have dwelt on the banks of the Nile and have been a very assiduous worshipper! If we to-day stop short of worship—(difficult when the ruff is really fine)—our cats are always treated as *members of the family*, and it is wonderful how intelligent and affectionate poor Puss

becomes when given a chance. However, if we *are* "soppy" over our pets, we don't carry the spoiling to the lengths of the clever authoress of *Mice and Men* (Madeleine Lucette Ryley), who has a pampered fox terrier that refuses to get out of his basket in the morning until he has been served with his *early cup of tea*!

Before leaving the subject of cats, I have often wondered how it comes about that there are no male specimens at all. In our experience, whatever may be the sex mentioned in a kitten's credentials, in the fulness of time he invariably turns out to be a "she," and, as my brother-in-law, Barry Pain, says, "has a family every Tuesday."

In the bucolic early married days at Pinner we started *keeping* things—bees, and chickens; but with only moderate results. The bees consumed vast quantities of golden syrup, but produced little honey, and the poultry proved very erratic. At one time one of our fowls (not a bantam) took to laying eggs of about the size of a shilling, quite good as a farmyard jest, but poor for breakfast.

It was not long after my marriage that a curious thing happened. All the intense longing to compose music, which I had for so long felt and which had been practically repressed for years, now found vent. I wrote a song on my honeymoon and within a year produced my first serious composition, the song-cycle, *In a Persian Garden*.

I have so often been asked how I came to choose the subject that I may as well answer it here. I felt the desire to write something of larger dimensions than a song, and asked my husband to suggest a subject or a poem which would permit of more extended treatment. He told me that he had often thought that parts of the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám might furnish suitable material for a cantata. I already knew and loved the poem intensely, and decided to examine it with a view to dealing with it in such a manner ; but, study it as I would, I could not " feel it " in the suggested form. How the idea of a song-cycle suddenly flashed upon me I really do not know ; but, once having decided on this, I sketched the whole very rapidly—in a few weeks—though it took much longer to finish in

detail, of course. The first lines that I set—and I approached them with a feeling of hardly daring to venture—were :

“ I sometimes think that never blows so red  
The rose as where some buried Cæsar bled,  
That every hyacinth the garden wears  
Dropt in her lap from some once lovely head.

“ And this reviving herb whose tender green  
Fledges the river-lip on which we lean—  
Ah, lean upon it lightly ! for who knows  
From what once lovely lip it springs unseen ? ”

The rest just grew round this little nucleus, and I arranged the order of the stanzas as I required them, choosing the most lyrical versions from the several editions brought out by FitzGerald in his passion for revision—what Alphonse Daudet, an equally restless spirit, calls, “ *Ce maudit besoin de la perfection.* ” Not infrequently I found an earlier version more suitable for musical setting than those of the later editions.

I fancy FitzGerald's Omar must have been very much in the air about that time. It certainly pervaded our set. Many of us knew most of it by heart ; my husband had, as I have said, already been considering it for musical treatment, and Edward Heron-

Allen, who married my sister Marianna, went so far as to devote two or three years to mastering the Persian language for the sole purpose, I believe, of studying the *Rubáiyát* in the original tongue.

He later published two volumes of unique interest to lovers of Omar, in which he included his literal translations of the originals and traced every stanza of FitzGerald to its source, thus giving the *coup de grâce* to that section of literary quibblers who insisted that a considerable portion of the FitzGerald version was original work of which there was no original to be found in Omar. The idea for the title of my song-cycle occurred to me when I found that in the Persian language the word *garden* also means *poem*.

In our dear little Pinner house I had ample time in which to compose, free from interruption, for I had not at that time the doubtful blessing of too many near neighbours. But my sister, Mrs. Barry Pain, lived within a mile, the W. S. Gilberts, ever most hospitable, were within a short drive, and Maude Valérie White took a charming cottage in a road yclept "Love

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Lane," and quite near us. I had sung a great many of her exquisite songs, and we had long before that time become close friends.

At Pinner, by the way, she and I tried to become expert cyclists. I remember her telling me that the great "tip" was to have the saddle so low that when you fell off you hadn't far to go! But, in spite of this precaution, I am afraid neither of us made a great success of it. I was always nervous of meeting cattle in the road. In fact, my husband used to say that the appearance of a single cow in the landscape sufficed to send me and my bicycle into the ditch.

One day, W. S. Gilbert met me on my "wheel," and said he never was more surprised in his life—in fact, he added somewhat profanely, if wittily: "You might as well expect to meet the Virgin Mary on a bicycle!"

Maude White used to rush in sometimes to play me passages from a Rumanian opera that she was then at work upon, but which unfortunately has not up till now been finished. Once, I remember, she had

had some difficulty in finding a musical phrase sufficiently *ecstatic* for her heroine to sing in praise of her warrior lover ; but next morning she arrived calling out, "I've got it ! I just thought to myself : *feel* proud of him—and there it was ! Listen."

And with her "composer's voice" (which I must own is the synonym of *none*) she managed to give an electrifying rendering of a sumptuous melody.

My mention of the "composer's voice" reminds me of once hearing Gounod, at his home in Paris, give a wonderful interpretation of nothing less than Donna Anna's first long recitative from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, accompanying himself on the piano. He had a passionate admiration for Mozart's music, and he expounded the beauties of this recitative with great fervour.



## CHAPTER VII

### "IN A PERSIAN GARDEN"

Mrs. Edward Goetz—The First Performance—First Press Appreciation by Hermann Klein—It arrives viâ New York—Analysis by Professor Edward Dickinson—Sonnet by Angela Goetze—Sonnet by Oliver Grey

WHEN my *In a Persian Garden* was completed, I thought I might as well try to get it published ; but although I offered it to ever so many publishers they one and all refused it, saying that it was difficult music, and "they saw no possibility of there being any demand for chamber music involving so many singers." Rather depressed, I ventured one day to play it to a very kind friend, Mrs. Edward Goetz, sister of the late Lord Burnham, a composer herself, and the best kind of musical enthusiast. (My sister Alma has since married her son Charles.)

Her house was a rendezvous for the notabilities of the musical world, who knew that they found in her a loyal friend and a sincere and clear-sighted critic.



When I had finished playing it through, and singing what I could of the soprano, contralto, tenor, and bass parts, to my surprise and delight she kissed me and said : " I want to introduce this work to London. The first performance shall be given at my house, and it shall be a good one." She was as good as her word, for not only did she induce Messrs. Metzler, as a personal favour to her, to publish my work, but she immediately set about getting together a quartette of splendid artists to interpret it. She sent out invitations right and left for the (to me) eventful soirée ; and the whole evening seems like a dream to me now !

The *Persian Garden's* first press notice was from the pen of Mr. Hermann Klein, who was present, and who was then musical critic to *The Sunday Times*. I append the paragraph, which was a source of great encouragement to me in my entirely new departure.

There will shortly be published by Messrs. Metzler & Co. a composition of very remarkable merit, from the pen of Miss Liza Lehmann (Mrs. Herbert Bedford), written for four voices with pianoforte accompaniment. It is a song-cycle entitled

*In a Persian Garden*, the words being selected from FitzGerald's translation of the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám. I heard it the other night at the house of Mrs. Edward Goetz, where the solos were sung (and finely sung) by Madame Albani, Miss Hilda Wilson, Mr. Ben Davies, and Mr. Bispham, the fair composer herself presiding at the piano. The music was quite a revelation—not of mere talent, but of unsuspected power and variety of expression, of depth of melodic charm and technical resource. When the time comes, as it surely will in the autumn at the “Pops,” for a public performance, I hope to speak of this effort with the detail it deserves. Meanwhile, I congratulate Miss Lehmann on the triumph in store for her.—*From “The Sunday Times,” July, 1896.*

In the autumn the foreshadowed performance at the Monday Popular Concerts took place, and several other performances followed. But it was not until it had been given in New York that the *Persian Garden* may be said to have arrived. There it was so fortunate as to make a kind of furore.

Perhaps, as this work is the one by which I am best known to the public,

I may be forgiven for quoting, almost at full length, the following descriptive analysis of the work by Professor Edward Dickinson, which appeared in *The Musician* of Philadelphia. Needless to say, that part of his critique that refers to my share of the work is far too indulgent, but it filled me with intense gratitude, and naturally encouraged me to further effort.

"IN A PERSIAN GARDEN"

By Liza Lehmann

One of the most redoubtable of recent successes in the concert world is that achieved by the work of the above title and authorship, which was first published in England in 1896, and which has gained a wide popularity in this country during the season just past. In the field of literature the issuance of a work which at once seizes universal interest is so frequent a phenomenon that it excites no surprise; but in musical production an instant and widespread success is comparatively so rare that a conquest like that achieved by *In a Persian Garden* calls for more than casual attention. In this particular case the very announcement of its subject is

a sort of challenge, and the first question to be asked is how much of the extraordinary interest which the work has aroused is due to the unique celebrity of the poem to which it is set. It might appear at first thought that a musical composition could easily be floated into favour by its mere association with a poem so famous and beloved; but, on second consideration, it becomes evident that such a connection, which could be a help in the preliminary introduction into cultured society, would only make disapproval the speedier and more crushing if the claim were not substantiated by the highest merit in the music itself. The maxim *noblesse oblige* holds good in works of imagination as well as in social life, and the singular affection in which the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám are held by all lovers of art would make the demand upon the composer who ventured to set them to music exceptionally jealous and exacting. From this point of view the heartiness and unanimity of favour which has greeted Liza Lehmann's work is all the more a substantial tribute to her genius. She has not only gained distinction as a composer, but she has also performed the service of suffusing the great poem with a new glory, and of carrying the knowledge of it into homes and hearts which it had not hitherto reached.

The stanzas known to the English reading public as the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám consist of selections from a meditation on life and death, written about the year 1100, by the Persian poet Hakim Omar, called Khayyám or the tent-maker, and paraphrased in a loose series of 101 quatrains by Edward FitzGerald, an English *littérateur*, who died in 1883.

. . . . .

FitzGerald spent twenty years or more upon this task, his first version being published in 1859 and the fourth in 1879, and the result is a perfection of poetic art the equal of which we can find only by going back to Keats. How much of the characteristic magic of this translation is due to Omar himself, and how much to his English interpreter, is a matter for the adepts in oriental lore to decide; but, at any rate, this collection of verses now stands as the finest elegiac poem that has appeared in English since *In Memoriam*, which it even surpasses in felicity of diction, perfection of form, boldness of imagery, and in its attitude of unfaltering courage in the face of the most appalling mysteries of reality. Its immeasurable depth and flawless beauty have given it a place among the classics of English speech, have multiplied

editions, glossaries, and eulogies until the Omar literature forms a library by itself, and has subtly diffused its thought into the world-wide currents of influence which are directed by the poetry and philosophy of England.

There is nothing reserved or distrustful in the enthusiasm of the lovers of Omar-FitzGerald. The haunting beauty and the infinite pathos of the poem grow more penetrating with every repetition, and those that admire it most are those that know it by heart. The profound sadness which the thought of the swift passing of life and its joys arouses in a contemplative mind which looks for no continued existence beyond the grave has never been surpassed. Hopeless they are indeed, yet, in spite of occasional bitterness, they leave the conviction that, even if this life be all, it is worthy to be loved for the sweetness and grace which it offers to all who are able to accept it with reverence and courage. And still more than this, the poem carries upon every page the consoling idea that a large measure of the spiritual beauty of existence consists in the soul's very consciousness of its brevity.

It would seem a bold venture to set such a poem to music. What self-assurance to presume to add anything to the perfect work of Omar and FitzGerald! What tones



are worthy to be mated to such stanzas as those beginning :

“ I sometimes think that never blows so red  
The rose as where some buried Cæsar bled.”

Or those beginning :

“ I sent my soul through the Invisible,  
Some secret of that after-life to spell.”

Or this dying fall at the close, quoting, as Liza Lehmann does, from the first version :

“ Ah, moon of my delight, who know'st no wane,  
The moon of heaven is rising once again ;  
How oft hereafter rising shall she look  
Through this same garden after me—in vain !

“ And when thyself with shining foot shalt pass  
Among the guests star-scattered on the grass,  
And in thy joyous errand reach the spot  
Where I made one—turn down an empty glass.”

It is evident that the peculiar elements that give their special virtue to such lines as these cannot be intensified by any musical accompaniment. Notice, for instance, the choice arrangement of words, the exquisitely modulated assonance, in the first two lines quoted, and the proud reserve of pathos in the last two stanzas. Such traits cannot be reproduced in music, nor is it music's purpose to reproduce them. If the setting is successful it will emphasize

the ground mood of feeling from which the definite ideas proceed, and the general tenderness and grandeur of the poem as a whole will likewise be enforced with cumulative power by the melodies and harmonies. This, in brief, is the task to which Liza Lehmann has addressed herself, and one in which, as I, an Omar devotee, gratefully acknowledge, she has eminently succeeded.

The composer has selected twenty-nine whole stanzas and fragments of four others and has set them for solos, duets, and quartets. Since there is never any repetition of words within the lines, and but little repetition of lines or stanzas, the sections of which the work is composed are in most cases short, terse, and even abrupt, like the quatrains themselves, each containing an idea which is complete in itself, although in the music, as in the poetry, sustaining a general correspondence of style throughout. The difficulty of securing unity, and at the same time emotional contrast, in a work of this fragmentary nature has been overcome on the one hand by a uniform elevation and essential consistency of style, and on the other hand by a skilful alternation of forms, moods, and climaxes. This cluster of forms is also loosely tied together by the reintroduction of three or four pronounced themes, not exactly “leading



motives," but serving the purpose of connecting links in the otherwise detached and unrelated sections. The musical treatment alternates between a sententious declamatory style, half song and half chant, and a broader, more symmetrical melody. The prevailing method, however, is declamatory, exceedingly intense, concentrated, and vigorous.

. . . . .

I shall content myself with calling attention to a few salient points in which its characteristic quality is most conspicuously to be found. The first impression received in reading through the work is one of massive force and intensity of style. There is not a dull or commonplace line from beginning to end. The hearer may not approve of the treatment at every point, but there is not a page that will leave him indifferent. The composition is rich in passages of exquisite beauty, moving pathos, and telling vigour. It is very interesting to observe that the composer is not simply an interpreter, she is not content merely to reproduce the prevailing fatalistic and somewhat epicurean mood of the Persian sage ; but, as FitzGerald has added a note of revolt and passionate inquiry which is characteristically modern and occidental, so Liza Lehmann has carried this tendency

still further and struck accents of gloom and despair which imply a mental attitude quite different from that of the original author. This, of course, is within a composer's right, provided it is not carried so far as to become a gross perversion of the poet's intention ; it is one of those high privileges of music as an art which give it not only its opportunity, but its necessity as a final resort of the soul's demand for expression of its deepest emotions. In the highest reaches of vocal music, as the great masters have shown, the composer is not simply a reflector of the poetic statement, but a part-creator with the poet.

The student of *In a Persian Garden* is struck at once with the directness and freshness of the melodies, both in the recitatives and in the large song-like movements. There seems to be an “inevitableness” about them, as though the thought of the lines actually forced these particular melodies out of the composer's mind almost in spite of herself. It may be noted how this impression of strength and weight is often imparted within a very narrow compass of pitch. . . . The more extended and lyric melodies are also exceedingly characteristic and of rare loveliness. Such magical utterances may be found on many pages. . . . Such songs as these give opportunity for a high degree of tonal and

expressive power on the part of a singer, and furnish admirable objects of study from many points of view.

The peculiar impression of depth and power which this work conveys is due still more perhaps to its wealth of harmony and brilliancy of tone-colour. In certain passages, the harmony is the chief element of effect, and even in certain lines where the melody becomes most radiant, the characteristic glow is really produced by the vivid harmonic colouring. This mutual reinforcement between melody and harmony, each enhancing the other, is, in fact, the one most efficient controlling element of the work throughout.

Liza Lehmann often exhibits a startling boldness in the use of dissonant harmonies, lavishing the most glowing tints with a profusion which would be wastefulness if her resources of harmonic combination were not practically unlimited. Occasionally she almost exceeds the bounds of the permissible, . . . and she sometimes produces the weirdest tone effects by throwing in a single note foreign to the controlling tonality, as the C flat in the bass solo beginning "Myself when young." To cite noticeable beauties of harmony would require mention of almost every page. . . . Schumann said that a good composer is known by his basses; the vitality and

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dignity of *In a Persian Garden* are due to a large extent to the freedom and force of the middle and lower parts. The character of the melody requires an accompaniment of great breadth and solidity, and Liza Lehmann almost exhausts the resources of the piano in the way of sonority of tone. Some of the effects which she demands cannot properly be produced without a third pedal.

Taken for all in all, Liza Lehmann has produced a work which, as a contribution to the ever-rising fame of Omar Khayyám, must be given a place beside the vivid illustrations of Elihu Vedder. *In a Persian Garden* is a remarkable example of the power of the great poem to inspire the mind of a sympathetic musician. It exhibits resources that should not be exhausted by a single effort, and all lovers of music will look expectantly for further work on the same ambitious scale from this hitherto little-known composer.

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And so *In a Persian Garden* went on its way through the American Continent. Every mail brought me news of performances, frequently in places I had never heard of, throughout the length and breadth of the United States ; and American visitors

in London used to call upon me in surprising numbers, with and without introductions, but all moved by a delightful and refreshing enthusiasm which I fully appreciated. It became quite a little joke how many hundred singers wrote to tell me that they had been in the *very first* quartet to perform the work in the United States.

By the way, I have often been asked how I hit upon the local colour. As a matter of fact, I made no conscious effort to reproduce it; but, strangely enough, I have been told by those who have travelled in Persia that some of the phrases in the song *Ah, Moon of my Delight*, and other numbers are curiously like snatches of music they have heard in that country. If so, I can only say that, as I have never travelled in the East, the local colour must have come to me quite instinctively, or rather that it really emanated from the spirit of the poem.

In this connection I suppose I was intended to be flattered when a young lady of our acquaintance one day rushed up to me after a performance, saying: "Oh, thank you! Thank you! *Do* let me thank

you! The local colour is *too* wonderful. I *have* so enjoyed it—I simply felt as if I was at *Liberty's*!"

Naturally the success of the work brought me many charming tributes from friends and from unknown enthusiasts; and I

Sonnet.

On hearing *Leja Schimmé's Song-Cycle*,  
"In a Persian Garden",

A woman's hand has swept athwart the strings,  
That stretch Arabian from the dreamy West,  
And with swift soothing of the soul's thirst,  
A Wondrous melody drowned us kings;  
Although quick-soaring forth on radiant wings  
Glories of Persian glory olden old  
Had spanned the ages with a bridge of gold,  
And kissed the lips of genius as she sings.

O vision of a loveliness intense,  
Where earth has never cheered than far-off Heaven;  
And all the crimson of the vernal face  
Has for its ashes e'en the purple leaves  
Of wind-tost roseleaves, when the heart's desire  
Has past, & sleeps, as sleep hearts that have striven.



should like to reproduce here two sonnets that reached me soon after its first public performance in London, and which gave me very real pleasure, and also probably made me very vain—for a time.

The foregoing sonnet is from the pen of Angela Goetze, a sister of the artist, and now Mrs. Emile Mond.

The following sonnet is by Oliver Grey, who afterwards included it in a volume of his poems, called *Rhymes and Rhapsodies*.<sup>1</sup>

At me, 'twas many a rose, as 'twere Omar sang,  
Has spent its sweetness on the passing wind;  
How many a springtime rose has, since, behind  
The veil he stepped, and from the 'Eternal wrong,  
The Truth unbound philosophy among.  
Yet, ere garden Camp about his narrow bed,  
For though the Greater Truth he failed to find,  
He gave men solace with his golden tongue  
There, in an alien land remote, apart,  
Their old-time fragrance still those laurels keep;  
And thou, fair Lady, when pure fingers sweep  
The clouds of fancy, to resposon strings  
Hast turned the poets' fond imaginings  
Making those wishes, nobler, with thy art.

Oliver Grey

To Mrs. Liza Lehmann

A poor appreciation of a great pleasure.

December 14, 1896.

<sup>1</sup> *Rhymes and Rhapsodies*, by H. Rowland Brown.

## CHAPTER VIII

"In Memoriam"—"The Daisy-chain"—My two Sons—  
Our Family Rounds Book—"Sergeant Brue"—"The Vicar of  
Wakefield"

MY next extended composition was a setting of some twelve numbers from Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, for a solo voice with pianoforte accompaniment; but the sombre character of the subject and the fact that one voice had to bear the whole burden, prevented the work from making a very wide appeal, although it has been beautifully sung in this country by Kennerley Rumford, George Baker, and a few others, and in America by David Bispham. At the same time, if one's own instinct has any value, I think some of my best writing is to be found in the pages of *In Memoriam*, and it gave me intense pleasure to find that view so generously expressed by the very



fastidious critic of the *Manchester Guardian* on the work's first performance in that city :

It is a remarkable work. It naturally suggests a comparison with the same composer's *Persian Garden*. Though the songs in the former cycle are for one, instead of four voices throughout, there is much similarity between the two in general style and treatment. The text of the work heard yesterday is taken from Tennyson's poem. In the music we find the same rich romance, much the same profound and sombre emotion, as in the *Persian Garden* music, but less perfect correspondence with the mood of the poetry. The mood of *In Memoriam* is haggard and despairing at first ; trustful, resigned, and tranquillized at last ; but the music, though apt enough to the former note, does not perfectly express the latter. Though, on the whole, we find Madame Lehmann less apt in finding musical symbols for the Christian Tennyson than for the pessimistic Omar, there are features of wonderful beauty in the Tennysonian cycle, and one song, *Sweet after Showers, Ambrosial Air*, seems to us much finer than anything in the *Persian Garden*. The composer has in this song had a truly remarkable inspiration. She has hit upon

an accompaniment figure of such nobility as one finds in the work of no other composers except Schumann and Brahms, and that figure, managed with unfailing truth and delicacy of feeling, united with a deeply expressive melody in a piece the tranquil charm and tender solemnity of which suggest the moonlit sea. The accompanied recitation, forming an epilogue to the cycle, we hold to be a mistake, but on the whole the work is one of undeniable interest and poetic beauty. It was most admirably sung by Mr. Kennerley Rumford.

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My next composition was in complete contrast to the foregoing, namely, *The Daisy-chain*, a garland of songs of childhood written in a light-hearted vein. The first London performance took place at my own house, in fact I gave two performances by two different quartets on two consecutive afternoons. This was a plan resorted to for the simple reason that our drawing-room was not large enough to seat all our musical friends at one and the same time. Appearing at first sight to be an unfortunate arrangement, it had this great advantage : the two quartets of accomplished singers, composed respectively of Miss Louise Dale,

Madame Marian Mackenzie, Mr. Ben Davies, and Mr. Denis O'Sullivan ; Miss Evangeline Florence, Miss Ada Crossley, Mr. Joseph O'Mara, and Mr. Denham Price, were so determined to outshine each other that no rehearsals seemed too many or too arduous for them, and both companies ended by giving the most captivating renderings.

Mr. Henry Mills, of the National Sunday League, gave the first public performance. He asked me to play the accompaniments, and I was very much touched when I received a cheque for thirty guineas for so doing, for I had of course not asked for any fee whatever for playing my own work.

So *The Daisy-chain* was launched ; and, in England, was often sung by as many as eight concert parties on the same day. I followed with *More Daisies*, written as encore numbers for *The Daisy-chain*, and of these *The Cuckoo* became particularly popular here ; but in America the more serious *Persian Garden* remained the favourite of my works.

Meanwhile, my two little boys had been

born—and I was far more wrapped up in my “living poems” than in any art, however absorbing and fascinating. I inherited from my mother an enormously strong maternal instinct, and love of my children became the very mainspring of my existence. I have always—(thank God for the remembrance!)—placed them before my art and before any other interest in life. My boys and I have always been devoted *friends*, and, so long as they were well and happy, I felt able to meet any bothers and troubles with composure. My maternal zeal became quite a joke as they grew older, and reached the schoolboy stage; and when I used to “fuss” after them with warm waistcoats if the weather changed, etc., etc., I used to apologize profusely, and beg them to remember that I was impelled by instinct and could not help myself—in fact, that I was their “natural protector.”

So they bore with me and grew and flourished, and however late I might return from a party or a concert, or any other expedition, I never went to bed without first creeping to their bedsides and tucking

them up, with a blessing and a grateful heart. Sometimes they smiled in their sleep.

As I have since had the overwhelming sorrow of losing my beloved eldest son, Rudolf, at the age of eighteen years, I can hardly bear to look back on the contrast of those happy early days, so full of splendid promise. But who dreamt then of "wars and war's alarms," and of the rivers of tears that would have to flow? Here are portraits of my two boys, Rudolf and Leslie, at the respective ages of fourteen and eleven.

Both my children early showed extraordinary musical talent, in fact both began composing melodies at the age of three, some of them with quite a sense of character and climax. Later they showed great natural feeling for counterpoint, and my husband used to take pleasure in teaching them rounds and catches, some of them quite intricate, to test and foster their capacity for maintaining the pitch, and of holding their own parts without faltering.

We very soon had so many of these



RUDOLF ELLIS DAVID BEDFORD, 1909

*From a photograph by Sala Arbus*



LESLIE HERBERT BEDFORD, 1909

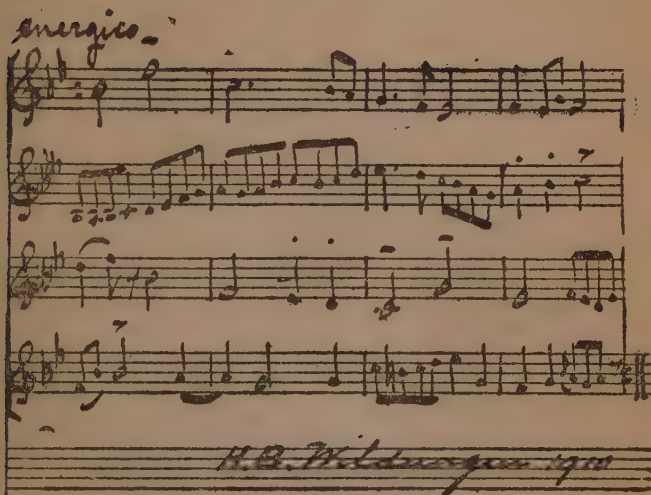
*From a photograph by Sala Arbus*





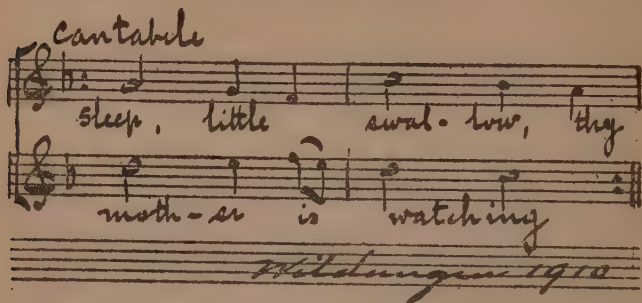
rounds and catches that our elder boy, Rudie, collected them into a Family Rounds Book, from which I will quote.

Here is one of them, in four parts, written in Wildungen, where we all spent the summer holidays of 1910.



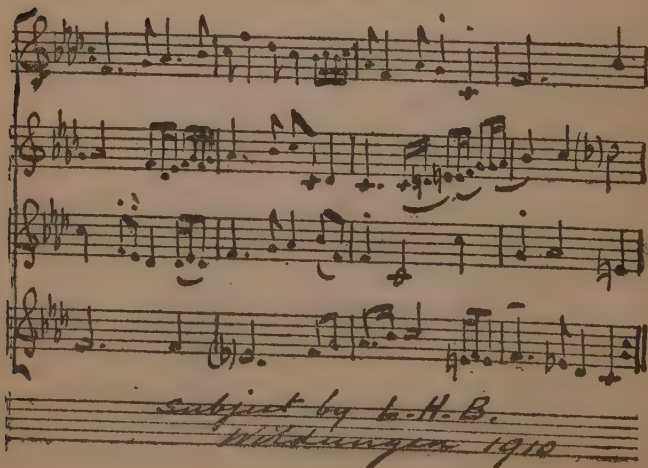
This was intended to be sung without words ; but the little events of the moment often furnished us with subjects. At the Wildungen villa the swallows had built nests under the overhanging eaves, and these were full of young. So we made a

little lullaby for the baby swallows. This also has four parts :

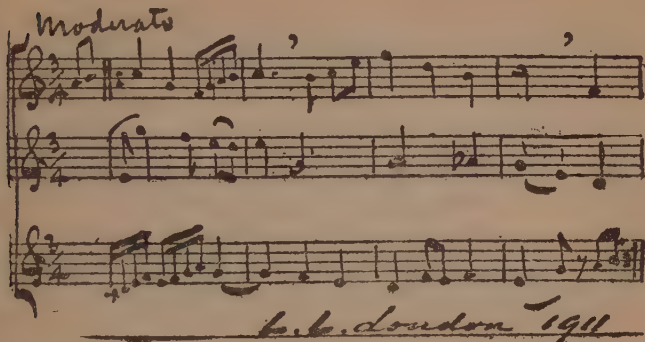


The boys thought the words very "mushy"—and so they were—and could only be induced to sing them as a concession to "mother's sentimentality."

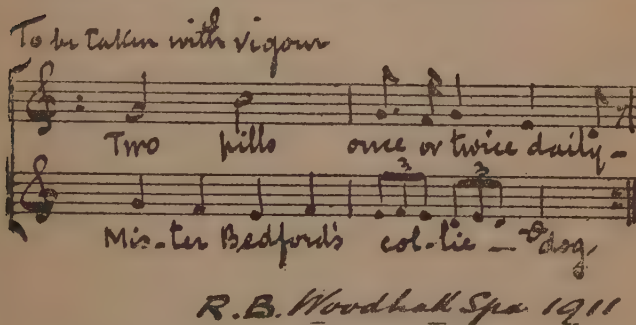
The subject of the next example was by Leslie, aged ten at that time :



Here is one that I contributed to the book :



I remember a box of pills arriving from the local vet. at Woodhall Spa for "Laddie," our collie. The instructions on the lid of the box gave Rudie the words for this :



Not long before our second boy, Leslie, had reached his third birthday, the business

in which my husband was engaged was brought to grief by the South African War. I can pass lightly over this difficult time, the more so by reason of the many warm expressions of sympathy that reached us from our large circle of friends, and which certainly formed a silver lining to this cloud. I remember them all, including one cablegram of several pages that crossed the Atlantic from Lillian Blauvelt and her husband, offering us anything and everything. We gave up our London house and went to live, for the sake of economy, in the gentle suburbia of Wimbledon, accompanied by our faithful nurse, Alice Sayers, the children's devoted slave for nine years. Our *under-nurse*—(*à la* Peter Pan)—was our dear old collie dog "Laddie," who remained in the family even longer.

It was while we were living in Wimbledon that I lost first my sister Marianna, a year later my dear mother, and not long afterwards my father—sorrows that I felt profoundly.

But the children were very happy at Wimbledon. They had a large garden, and a little wooden hut in an apple-tree,

and a large collection of Abyssinian guinea-pigs with long, pretty fur ; at one time they had as many as sixteen, and Antony and Cleopatra (the Patriarchs, called Tony and Pattie for short) used to sit up to meals with us !

I was now writing a great many songs ; and also accepted a commission to compose the music for a musical farce, *Sergeant Brue*. The libretto was a very witty one by Owen Hall ; but, as far as *my* opportunities were concerned, they were almost negligible. There was scarcely a singer with a “legitimate” voice in the whole company. Moreover, several extraneous numbers were interpolated to give the comedians the particular kind of opportunities they preferred, and everybody was so busy impressing on me “*No Persian Gardens here, please !*” that perhaps I took too much trouble to make the music even more commonplace than it need have been. However, the piece ran in London for about nine months, many tours went out, and it is still occasionally “on the road,” either here, or in America, or Australia. One of the numbers that I wrote for *Brue*

achieved a wide popularity that has often made me blush : it was a little song called *If I built a World for you*. Frankly mere " fluff," I originally wrote it for Miss Zena Dare to sing in the soubrette part ; but the management refused it, deciding that they wanted something " brighter " ; so I temporarily laid it by. But it came up again ; I might almost say it came up again in a huff. The well-known soprano, Miss Louise Dale, went with me one day to let Mr. Arthur Boosey—(of Messrs. Boosey and Co.)—hear a song of a very different type that I had composed for her, with a view to his publishing it. Mr. Boosey did not appear at all impressed with my effort, and in lugubrious accents expressed himself as doubtful regarding its prospects. He " feared it might be too serious, etc., etc." " Oh," I exclaimed, " I know the sort of thing you want ! "—and in derision I began singing and playing *If I built a World for you*. I had scarcely played more than the first three or four bars when Mr. Boosey leant forward and quietly said, " Yes, that is exactly what I *do* want ! " A few weeks later Miss Dale sang it at one of his London

Ballad Concerts, and ever after that its sale has continued with extraordinary obstinacy.

My next work for the stage was some incidental music that I wrote for H. B. Irving, for his production of *The Twin Sister* at the Duke of York's Theatre. Incidental music is generally something of a heart-break for the composer.

This was followed by a romantic light opera, *The Vicar of Wakefield*. The possibilities in Goldsmith's immortal story for such a purpose had attracted me for some time, when, by a curious coincidence, our friend David Bispham, on a visit to this country, confided to me his ardent desire to portray the Vicar in song. He was therefore particularly interested in my scheme, and, when he heard the music, at once offered to purchase the rights of performance for a given time, from myself and Mr. Laurence Housman, the librettist.

When I first conceived the idea of a musical version of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Mr. Arthur Boosey, to whom I intended to offer the music for publication, at once commissioned Mr. Housman to write the book and the lyrics. No sooner was the



work finished than Mr. Bispham, with great enthusiasm, gathered about him a company which included Isabel Jay for the part of Olivia, Edith Clegg for Sophia, Mrs. Theodore Wright for Mrs. Primrose, Richard Temple for Burchell, and John McCormack for the part of Squire Thornhill. The latter was then quite a beginner, and I well remember his being brought to sing to me at Wimbledon, when his curiously attractive voice made an immediate impression both upon David Bispham and myself. He proved, however, to be so inexperienced as regards the stage, and his Irish brogue was at that time so unquenchable and out of the character of the young squire, that after the first few rehearsals it was mutually agreed that the part did not suit him. I wonder if the eventually celebrated John McCormack, when treading the boards of Covent Garden or the New York Opera House, has ever remembered and laughed over this little *contretemps*! His place in our company was filled by Walter Hyde, and rehearsals were pushed on. Mr. Frank Curzon, of the Prince of Wales's Theatre, became interested, and the first London

performance was duly fixed to take place at that theatre.

Now, at the very first rehearsals it had become apparent that there were far too many long dialogues without music. My original intention had been “*opéra comique*” as given in Paris— that is, almost continuous music with *very little* spoken dialogue. Our author had apparently not understood this, and, as his long-drawn conversations naturally destroyed the musical continuity, he was asked to reduce them. Mr. Housman, however, was away in the country, and wrote back that he could not personally undertake any excisions or revisions, but gave us *carte blanche* to do anything that was found to be necessary, and said that he would attend the dress rehearsal as a spectator. If Mr. Housman had been more considerate as a librettist, he would not have glided out of his responsibilities in this way, and we might all have been saved the train of tragi-comic disasters that ensued. However, to the point. The day of the dress rehearsal arrived and with it Mr. Housman, who then for the first time saw the piece as amended,

His surprise was nearly as great as that of the country bumpkin who once came to an artist and asked him to paint a posthumous portrait of his father. The artist demanded a photograph from which to paint the picture, but was told that none existed. However, that would not matter ; his father had been a handsome dark man, and *the artist must just do his best !* The portrait-painter, seeing the kind of fellow he had to deal with, named the price and agreed to undertake the commission. In due time the farmer returned to see the picture. He gazed at it enraptured for several minutes, and then said : “ Fine ! very fine ! But, dear old dad, *how you have altered !* ”

In our case, however, the irate beholder did *not* exclaim “ Fine ! ” but much the reverse ; and with considerable flow of eloquence told Mr. Bisham that he could not recognize his play, and that it was utterly *ruined*. Moreover, he threatened an injunction to restrain performance. This was a horrible position for all of us at the eleventh hour, and under the circumstances we could not see that Mr. Housman

had any earthly right to take such action, and all preparations continued. In an atmosphere of threats and counter-threats the work enjoyed considerable success during its preliminary tour of two or three weeks in provincial theatres, and then came the first London performance and a packed house. Perhaps I had better quote the *Daily Chronicle* to describe what followed.

## DISOWNED OPERA

AUTHOR EJECTED FROM THE THEATRE

“FIRST NIGHT” SCENES

Not only has the production of the new light opera, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, been marked by the disavowal of authorship by the writer, Mr. Laurence Housman, but it has been rendered unique by an episode which is happily rare in theatrical history—the expulsion of its author from his private box on the first night.

The story as related by Mr. Frank Curzon to a *Daily Chronicle* representative last night was to the effect that his secretary came to him to complain of a gentleman in one of the boxes, who had “laughed derisively” during one of the moments of sentiment in the first Act,

"Neither he nor I," said Mr. Curzon, "was aware that it was Mr. Laurence Housman in the box until we found by reference that it was the complimentary box, a ticket for which we had sent him. Mr. Housman—whom I had never met before—has prevented the book of words being sold in the theatre, and has hindered the production of the play.

"I went to the box and told him he must leave the theatre. Mr. Housman intimated that he did not intend to leave, entirely ignoring the fact that he was there as my guest.

" 'I'll give you five minutes to go out,' I said, adding something to show I was in earnest, and," concluded Mr. Curzon, "that was his cue for the exit."

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During this scene the performance was continued, and in spite of many defects *The Vicar of Wakefield* certainly made a great success. During the acrimonious newspaper correspondence that ensued, some light-hearted person sent me the following limerick :

"Quoth the author, 'My's play's in a mess.  
Don't tell me it's such a success ;  
You have cut it about,  
And you've had me thrown out,  
And now you have told all the Press.'"

The Press, however, was most kind, as may be seen by the following extracts from the notices ; and with ordinary chances I think the piece might have come to stay. But, apart from the length of the dialogue, which, even after the offending liberties had been taken with the text, still needed an active pruning knife, we had chosen the wrong time of year for this type of entertainment. It was just before Christmas ; the winter was a particularly severe one, and the snow was piled up in the streets, making them almost impassable. And then the Pantomimes burst forth, and the receipts at the box-office, which had started splendidly, began to languish. This is a well-known Christmas-time occurrence in theatres, but our managers were not prepared to take too big a gamble in what was to some extent an experiment, as at that time no musical play save musical comedy was thought to have a chance.

By the time the poor Vicar was to make his parting bow, “ business ” had already begun to recover, and the whole company offered to continue playing at half-salaries, as they believed in ultimate victory. But Mr.



Curzon had already made arrangements to follow on with a musical comedy by Mr. Paul Rubens, a far "safer card," and no other suitable theatre could be found vacant.

Here are a few short extracts :

The arrangement of *The Vicar of Wakefield*, with which Mr. Bispham began a season of management on Wednesday, is ascribed to no individual librettist: for Mr. Laurence Housman writes to disclaim all responsibility for the piece. . . . There is, happily, no such doubt about the composer, who is Mme Liza Lehmann; and excellently has she done her work. Delighting all hearers with melodies that are as fresh and spontaneous as folk-songs and marked for the most part by a good deal of character. . . . Never has there been a better example of the advantages resulting from the knowledge of one's own limitations, and consequently never has Mme Liza Lehmann produced more successful work.—*From "The Times," December 14th, 1906.*

So old and highly prized a friend as *The Vicar of Wakefield* can hardly fail of a cordial welcome at this season of the year. Oliver Goldsmith's simple but fascinating story has been turned to musical account by Madame Liza Lehmann, and the result



of her efforts is altogether delicious. Number follows number, each more pleasing than the other, while the orchestration<sup>1</sup> is of a peculiarly delicate yet rich description.—*From “The Daily Telegraph.”*

In *The Vicar of Wakefield* Madame Lehmann has shown that we have in our midst a composer who is able to treat a suitable subject with all the grace, delicacy, and refined humour that characterized the work of the late Sir Arthur Sullivan.—*From “The Crown.”*

*The Vicar of Wakefield* appears to promise another triumph for comic opera. The music of Madame Liza Lehmann is quite charming. It sings well, the spirit of the lyrics and the scenes is capitally represented, and the melodies are delicate and the orchestration has a grace and an apparent simplicity, a quiet humour and subtlety delightful, particularly after the very pretentious, over-laboured music we often hear in less ambitious works. The “tunes” are not obviously “catchy.” Yet there was an encore for almost every number, and some of the concerted music, notably a quintet in the first act, is absolutely fascinating. There is no attempt to give an antique

<sup>1</sup> My husband had kindly undertaken the orchestration thereby saving me much fatigue.

air by turning the work into a ballad-opera ; several of the numbers fully realize the idea of light, unconventional modern opera.—  
*From " The Sketch."*

One swallow does not make a summer, but we really seem to have come to the point where operatic music by English composers is once more possible. . . . While Madame Liza Lehmann's setting of *The Vicar of Wakefield* was produced with enormous success at the Prince of Wales's last week. . . .

Goldsmith may have been Irish, but his little masterpiece, published originally in 1796, is dominantly English. A classic of the study, it has also tempted the dramatist. . . .

But the real success of *The Vicar of Wakefield* is the music which has been supplied by Madame Lehmann. . . . Her art is essentially English, and such a setting as that which she has supplied to *It was a Lover and his Lass* is worthy of Bishop at his best. The chief point that strikes one is the entire absence of theatrical trickiness in her score. Madame Lehmann does not belong to the theatre in any sense of the word. She comes from the greater outside world with a fine sense of musicianship, and, strange to say, she has completely

succeeded. . . . The finale of the second act—taken straight out of Goldsmith—is an effort in recitative which is worthy of Grand Opera, and the enthusiasm with which it was received by an audience that usually expects mere catchiness is an augury of the spread of operatic education.—  
*From “ The Sphere.”*

And among the letters I received none gave me greater pleasure than the following :

DEAREST LIZA,

I have still the impression on me of a most artistic, delightful entertainment, and I feel I would like to put into print some of my enthusiasm ! I don't know the *names* of the numbers. Have you a list or a book of the lyrics you could send me, without any trouble ?

It is difficult for me to tell you how truly I admire your work in *The Vicar*.

Although I am the first to admit that all the numbers are not of the same worth, most of them are real artistic gems. You have so faithfully preserved the pastoral spirit of the play right through and have given us some exquisitely simple melodies which to my mind have never been equalled. They say it is always better to consider

well the reproaches of your enemies than to believe all the good that is said of you by your friends ! But please believe that I might be an *enemy* of yours by the truthfulness of my criticism ! I mean every word I have written, and even at the risk of boring you I felt I just wanted you to know. I wrote a line to splendid Isabel Jay hoping my deep appreciation of her talent might give her some slight pleasure.

Very affectionately yours,

LONDON RONALD.

So much for *The Vicar of Wakefield* and its reception ! Amen !

W. S. Gilbert occupied a box on the first night and pronounced the music " libretto-proof." Unfortunately his words were not prophetic, but he subsequently most kindly offered me a libretto of his own. Although I fully appreciated such an honour, and was naturally tempted to collaborate with such an ideal librettist, yet, on reflection, I feared the particular subject that he offered was not within my range, and therefore I reluctantly preferred to forgo the pleasure of the collaboration.

## CHAPTER IX

"The Golden Threshold"—"Once upon a Time"—"Leaves from Ossian"—Needle-work—"The Life of a Rose"—"Bird Songs"—A Quaint Rehearsal—"The Nonsense Songs"

**A**MONG compositions that I wrote about this time was *The Golden Threshold*, an Indian Song-garland, the poems being by the delightful Indian poetess Soragini Naidu, who was discovered by Arthur Symons. This was followed by a fairy cantata, *Once upon a Time*, and the more serious choral work, *Leaves from Ossian*, a cantata, commissioned by Messrs. Chappell & Co. Much to my disappointment, the latter was never produced in London, and I chiefly remember it by its first provincial performance, throughout which, in the absence of the first fagotto, for which there was an important part, my husband sat at the desk in the orchestra and "played" the part through a brown paper tube made to represent the instrument.

There is nothing so trying for the eyes

as writing music, and it was the scoring of *Leaves from Ossian* during the winter months, by electric light, that almost ruined my eye-sight, so that I was compelled thenceforth to use glasses for reading small print—a great bore ! Oh, when will somebody invent the musical equivalent of a type-writer—or, better still, a dictagraph ?

In my early married life a hobby of mine was decorative needle-work, and I used to take a pride in embroidering without a traced pattern. Perhaps the most beautiful embroideries I have ever seen were those done by Mrs. Frankau (“ Frank Danby ”) author of *Pigs in Clover*, and other brilliant novels. Her sister, Mrs. Aria’s, embroideries competed with her very closely, however ; and I have always had a great admiration for the delightful old-world patch-work made by Mrs. Henry Russell, Landon Ronald’s mother.

Mrs. Frankau, Mrs. Aria, Mrs. Marcus Collins, and “ Owen Hall ” (their brother) formed a family group renowned for wit, and an evening at any of their houses always put one on the best of good terms with the world. I remember staying with Mrs.



Frankau at Wargrave, when one morning, after her week-end house-party had broken up, she sank into an arm-chair with : " Thank God they've all gone, and I can look my age ! "

Apart from my more ambitious work, I wrote several groups or sets of songs. These include *The Life of a Rose*, consisting of seven short songs for soprano, introduced by my friend Louise Dale ; and the *Bird Songs*, which Mme Blanche Marchesi was the first to sing, and which have had the good fortune to become very popular. *The Life of a Rose* has been put upon the stage by several people in their own ways ; that is to say, the songs have been sung, whilst the subject was more or less successfully illustrated in pictures and in action, even to the representation of a brown velvet bee about four feet high ! On one such occasion I received rather a shock ; for, having heard that this manner of presenting the songs had been successful, a rather corpulent soprano determined to make the experiment, and politely asked me to attend one of her rehearsals. I duly arrived, and when the curtain rose for the first scene, which was



to represent the unfolding of the rosebud, the stage was in complete darkness. Imagine my amazement when suddenly the glare of relentless limelight was cast full on a pair of stout legs in green tights. They were meant to represent the stalk of the rose ; and a mass of pink paper petticoats, held high above the head, to represent its still closed petals ! These were gradually permitted to descend and spread, as the rose was supposed to develop from bud to blossom. But I admit I could see no more—I laughed till the tears ran down my cheeks !

One day it occurred to me that the *Nonsense Songs* from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* might be made into a very amusing song-cycle ; and the idea took such hold of me that I sketched it in a couple of days and took it "red-hot" to Mr. William Boosey, the enterprising director of the publishing firm of Chappell & Co. The whole idea appealed to his vivid sense of humour, and he promptly put the little work down for one of the Queen's Hall Ballad Concerts. Both singers and audience seemed to enjoy the fun

equally, and the Press was again most cordial. The following few extracts from the Press will serve to give a good idea of the scope of this little work :

MADAME LEHMANN'S "NONSENSE SONGS"

At Queen's Hall, on Saturday afternoon, Mr. William Boosey had something unfamiliar to place before the patrons of the Chappell Ballad Concerts. This was nothing less than the first performance of Madame Liza Lehmann's latest song-cycle, *Nonsense Songs*. . . . Upon the nine numbers heard on Saturday the artist has once more lavished the refined and unobtrusive musicianship which invariably marks her compositions, and the ear confirmed the opinion, based upon a preliminary glance at the score, that she had discharged her task in a symmetrical manner. Among the pieces appear three quartets, the first dealing with *How doth the Little Crocodile*, which, with its humorous and realistic close, and touches of Eastern colouring, provides a capital opening number for a most entertaining work. The second quartet, *Will you walk a Little Faster*, is bright and amusing, and it was a decidedly happy idea to set *They told me you had been to her* as a chattering quartet, interrupted by recitatives in the manner of old-fashioned

Italian opera. This sally delighted the audience, and evoked prolonged applause. Madame Lehmann has, however, scored her chief success with the setting, as a duet for tenor and bass, of *You are old, Father William*. In felicitous phrases are expressed the earnest pleading of the youth for information and the dignified response of the sage. . . . The heartiest congratulations were bestowed upon Madame Lehmann and her companions when they had concluded their light-hearted task.—*From "The Daily Telegraph," January 13th, 1908.*

. . . The story of Alice and her quaint friends is one of the classics in English literature. The appeal of its topsy-turvy humour is irresistible, and the songs in their musical dress lose none of their point, for the music is unobtrusive and does not interfere with the words. . . . The audience completely fell in with the spirit of the songs and received the production with the utmost cordiality.—*From "The Morning Post," January 13th, 1908.*

A pleasing feature . . . was the first production of a cycle entitled *Nonsense Songs* by Madame Liza Lehmann. The text is taken from Lewis Carroll's inimitable *Alice in Wonderland*, and the quaintness

and humour of the lines are accentuated by Madame Lehmann's music. . . . The lively sense of humour shown by the composer, combined with her musicianly resource and knowledge of vocal effect, have resulted in a composition that will lighten the gravity of many concerts.—*From "The Referee," January 12th, 1908.*

. . . She has met Lewis Carroll on his own ground of delicate wit and humour, and clothed these old friends from *Alice in Wonderland* in dainty and sparkling musical raiment.—*From "The Tribune."*

. . . This delightful little work has been inspired by the verses in Lewis Carroll's immortal *Alice in Wonderland*, which have been set in the most fascinating manner by Madame Lehmann, who appears to be able to touch nothing without leaving it the richer in adornment.—*From "The Crown," January 18th, 1908.*

"NONSENSE SONGS"

(Second performance)

Many late comers had to be sent empty away from Queen's Hall on Saturday afternoon, for every seat was sold some time before the concert commenced. Mr. William Boosey's numerous patrons were evidently delighted to strengthen acquaint-

ance with Madame Liza Lehmann's *Nonsense Songs* from *Alice in Wonderland*, which proceeded on their way to a running accompaniment of laughter, hearty applause, too, being forthcoming at every convenient opportunity. That the merry and tuneful quartets and songs should bear repetition extremely well is not matter for surprise, for not only do tokens of skilful and refined musicianship continually appear in the score, but the composer has admirably reflected in tones the spirit and humour of Lewis Carroll's lyrics.—*From "The Daily Telegraph," January 26th, 1908.*

The Chappell Ballad Concert drew an immense crowd to Queen's Hall on Saturday afternoon. While the suspension of the "free-list" disposed of all "deadheads," many genuine visitors were turned away by an announcement "House full." Doubtless the general favour with which Madame Liza Lehmann's new song-cycle, *Nonsense Songs*, was received at the last concert and its wise inclusion in Saturday's programme accounted in a great measure for the large attendance.—*From "The Standard," January 27th, 1908.*

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Possibly some of my colleagues considered the choice of such a frivolous subject

undignified ; but I have never been burdened with musical snobbery, and I often think one of the qualities that I admire most in composers is aptness, that is, a due sense of proportion—the cutting of one's musical coat according to the poetic cloth. If the subject be ideal, let us by all means strive to rise to it as far as in us lies ; but, to my thinking, it shows no less a want of discernment to employ " tall " strains where they are out of place, than it does to fail to realize when a theme calls for lofty endeavour.

On my concert tours I found that the lighter works formed a very good contrast to the more serious portions of the programme ; and I noticed that, oddly enough, whenever we gave the *Nonsense Songs*, the hall was half full of clergymen !

## CHAPTER X

My American Tours—First Arrival in New York—American Voices—Train Journeys—California—Florida—Travelling Conditions

I CANNOT remember exactly how my concert tours — by which I mean recitals of my compositions, sung by a quartet of singers and accompanied by myself—came to be started ; but somehow I drifted into them by degrees on the invitation of different concert agents, and they gradually developed till I received an offer from R. E. Johnston, the energetic American impresario, to tour the United States. Looking back, I simply cannot imagine how, with my intensely nervous and home-loving temperament, I ever mustered sufficient courage for such an undertaking ! But I *did* ; and, as a matter of fact, the first long tour in America was followed by a still longer one in the following season.

For the first of these campaigns I was only allowed to take with me two vocalists



—namely, that excellent and versatile contralto, Mary Palgrave-Turner (now Mrs. Breville Smith), and a small boy soprano, who had made a great hit in my *Mr. Coggs and other Songs for Children* at the Ballad Concerts, where he captured the ear of my astute American manager. He predicted for his little protégé a huge success on the other side of the water, and was fully justified in the event.

The three other vocalists required for my *Persian Garden* and *Nonsense Songs*, which were included in the scheme, were to be engaged by me on my arrival in New York. This arrangement necessitated my hearing about sixty singers there, and gave me so much trouble that for the second tour I stipulated that I must be allowed to bring with me the complete company ready rehearsed. It consisted of Miss Blanche Tomlin (who has since abandoned concert work for musical comedy), Miss Palgrave-Turner once more, and Mr. Hubert Eisdell and Mr. Julian Henry. In December, 1909, I sailed for the first tour, and arrived in New York just before Christmas. I will discreetly draw a veil over the

tortures I endured on the high seas during what I believe must surely have been a particularly stormy passage. I have already stated that, as a sailor, I am absolutely hopeless ; so hopeless that, instead of becoming acclimatized to life on the ocean wave, with every voyage I seem to suffer more. Eventually, during the fourth crossing, I registered a vow of " Never again " for any consideration on earth !

However, to return to my first voyage to the new world. While we were still in the Hudson River, and I was still in my cabin, with a pea-green complexion and my heart in my mouth (literally !), a nimble flock of reporters bombarded the door, and, apparently crediting me with the gift of prophecy, demanded my impressions of America and the Americans. My husband, who was with me, was fortunately able to keep them at bay until I had at any rate passed the Customs House and reached our hotel. But a most aggravating situation arose with the Customs House authorities. I had naturally been obliged, in view of the long series of public appearances before me, to provide myself with a great number of

dresses. My trunks were duly opened ; I was asked if the dresses were intended for the stage. On my explaining that they were for concerts and for dinner parties, they were duly passed, and with great relief we drove off. It seems, however, that after my departure, for some weird reason, poor Miss Palgrave-Turner's trunks were held up by an energetic official who refused to be denied ; and while she expressed her surprise and dismay, probably in no mild terms, our small-boy soprano, Albert Hole, seeing a good opportunity of championing the cause of beauty in distress, protested to the official that "*Madame Lehmann's* dresses were not held up" ! The result was that the Customs actually had me tracked, and followed to the hotel, where they confiscated my entire wardrobe and held it in durance vile for the best part of a week. The afore-mentioned reporters immediately made the most of this, using such headlines as—

**" COMPOSER OF ' PERSIAN GARDEN '   
BEREFT OF CLOTHES "**

My impresario unsympathetically re-

garded this with much satisfaction as an unpaid advertisement !

After hearing interminable American vocalists of every grade in order to complete my quartet party, I was struck by two things : the exceptionally brilliant quality of their vocal tone, and their unfortunate neglect of a study of the mother tongue. It seemed to me that American singers sang every other language better. I believe this state of affairs has since been much improved ; for David Bispham and a few other eclectic artists have been making a regular crusade on the subject. For my own part, I certainly never lost an opportunity of expressing my very strong feeling with regard to the matter, and in America one has every inducement to express one's views on every subject.

Before my first public appearance Mr. Victor Harris, the distinguished composer, teacher, and conductor, gave a delightful reception in his studio to introduce me to his large circle of New York music-lovers. Some of these expressed surprise at not finding me grey and wizened, for they said they imagined the composer of the *Persian*

*Garden* must necessarily be *very old* ! I think my now completely white hair would certainly satisfy the pre-conceived views of my American cousins, though I should hardly expect them to strain politeness so far as to say, like the little boy who was asked by his mother if he remembered her when her hair was brown : “ Yes, but I prefer you in your present plumage ! ”

My first concert in America was given in Boston ; and, having survived that severe ordeal, a long chain of other recitals followed. The immense journeys were of course sometimes very trying ; and I could never have endured them but for the marvellous champagne-like quality of the atmosphere. My only trouble was my separation from my family. My husband was in New York, and my two adored children in London. I felt this acutely ; but I knew I had left my boys in the best of care, and fortunately I regularly received only good news of them throughout both my absences ; otherwise I could never have carried out what I had undertaken.

Looking back, I often marvel at the

amount of work and fatigue I have got through, for I was never very robust, and was for several years subject to severe headaches ; but I had the priceless capacity for long and dreamless sleep, which my doctor used to term my saving clause. My husband used to say that if I so much as turned over once before morning, I called it " a *wretched* night ! " To-day, alas ! my nervous system is in a sorry state. I toss and turn many times, and do not wake with that renewed feeling as of old. However, as a very wise old lady used to say, with a shake of the head : " Don't tell people how you are ; they don't want to know ! " and " Never tell your friends about your accidents ; they are not interesting unless you are killed ; and then you *can't* tell them. "

Our travels included the length and breadth of the United States, with a good part of Canada as well, and naturally brought us some terribly long trips—a journey of four days and nights without leaving the train being, I fancy, the maximum between two concerts. At Los Angeles, California, after one of these gigantic trips, I remember





LIZA LEHMANN, 1913

*From a photograph by Violet Blaiklock*





feeling so terribly fatigued that I telegraphed to headquarters in New York that I could not possibly go on at that rate. The curt rejoinder appealed to my sense of humour : " Regret cannot alter size of U.S. for you.—Johnston." So on we trundled, feeling as if we were caught up in a sort of unrelenting machinery.

The vast stretches of lonely prairie are very impressive, and had for me a haunting quality. Miles and miles of uninhabited grey-green land ; not a human being to be seen—occasionally the carcase of some animal—a sun-scorched skeleton.

The regions still inhabited by North American Indians fired my imagination ; and when the train halted at some small station of theirs, and a melancholy-eyed person, clad in a blanket, but bearing himself like a king, approached to sell basket-work, or when a smiling squaw with a nut-brown baby slung on her back held up plaited bead necklaces for sale, I lost my heart outright, paid any price, and felt that I must at least write a North American opera.

In other parts, the Chinese quarters of

certain Californian towns also captivated me greatly. In Vancouver some friends kindly volunteered to show me round, and I succumbed to the temptation of buying several kimonos of gorgeous hue. Beautiful colours have always fascinated me; so much so that I daresay I must sometimes have appeared quite rude when a friend has worn a particularly lovely amethyst or ruby and I have not been able to keep my eyes from it.

At Salt Lake City my fatigue reached its climax, and for the one and only time I was compelled to lie up for several days, missing a group of concerts, for which, of course, I was charged "damages" by my impresario. However, luckily I did not break down in the City-of-many-wives until *after* the concert. This was especially fortunate, as the house had been entirely sold out long before our arrival. The concert took place in a theatre, so, as the stage was lit by glaring footlights, and as the audience was therefore in comparative darkness, I was unable to look round and take stock of the proportion of ladies! I have wondered since whether perhaps a Mormon

Box Office issues "family tickets—to seat forty" !

Although our concerts were mostly given in concert-halls or theatres, in some of the smaller towns, where neither was available, we found, to our surprise, that we had to appear in churches or chapels. Imagine the *Father William* duet from *Alice in Wonderland* ending with the lines

" Do you think I can listen all day to such stuff ?  
Be off, or I'll kick you downstairs ! "

being given out from the altar steps of a Presbyterian chapel ! But nobody seemed to find it at all incongruous.

We spent a whole week in San Francisco—frequently it was only one day per town—and we gave several concerts there and in the immediate vicinity. It was one of the most enjoyable experiences of our whole tour. When I arrived at the St. Francis Hotel, opposite the tall column and statue of the saint—(which I was told had *swayed like a pendulum* during the great earthquake, but had not fallen)—I was deeply impressed. The hotel had been rebuilt, a magnificent new erection, on the site of its own ruins.

Stories by eye-witnesses of the earthquake, which was then still sufficiently recent not to be classed as ancient history, met one on every hand, although, in view of the flourishing new buildings, built with true American celerity, one could scarcely believe the nightmare-like accounts to be true. Some of the streets, however, had not yet been rebuilt, and the heaped-up wreckage was a gruesome sight. When I went to bed on the night after my arrival I naturally thought another earthquake was overdue, and determined to make ready for any emergency by placing purse, return ticket, and a box of matches at my bedside to make sure of essentials, at any rate ! But one soon forgot all such nervous fears, and surrendered oneself gladly to an endless round of the kindest hospitality, notably from the friends and relations of that unforgettable friend and artist, Denis O'Sullivan, not long before cut off by death in the midst of a brilliant career. San Francisco had been his beloved home, and all the time I was there I seemed to feel his presence.

Whilst in California we also visited the

little town of St. Sebastian—a dream of loveliness, with its semi-Moorish architecture gleaming in the sunlight among orange-trees—and our itinerary also took us to Claremont, with its University and its celebrated observatory. After the concert we were conducted there in brilliant moonlight, almost deafened on the way by the croaking of the bull-frogs. I thought it was cattle lowing, until I was enlightened! We were allowed to look through the huge telescope, and, for the first time, I gazed entranced upon portions of the Milky Way, a section of the Pleiades, the Seven Sisters, and Saturn with his rings. These wonderful sights have remained among my most treasured recollections.

By an error of management, said to be unavoidable, we visited Florida at a rather inauspicious time, namely, during Christmas week, when the big hotels were practically empty, and everything was in a state of preparation for the influx of visitors due to arrive in the first weeks of the New Year. So in these parts our audiences consisted to an unusual extent of “darkies,” whose high spirits had to be kept in check by

white policemen ! That the conditions were somewhat rough may be gathered from the following notice which was conspicuously displayed on the walls and in the wings of the theatre where our entertainment took place :

PERFORMERS TAKE NOTICE

WE ARE PLAYING TO LADIES AND CHILDREN AND YOU WILL DO THE MANAGEMENT A FAVOUR BY CUTTING OUT ANY DOUBLE ENTENDERS, THE WORD DAMROTTEN OR ANYTHING SUGGESTIVE.

Of course tropical weather prevailed, although it was December ; great vultures hovered in the deep-blue sky, and it was curious to see the skins of rattle-snakes drying at the front doors of the little wooden houses, mounted on long narrow boards about seven inches wide made for the purpose. Bathing was impossible on account of the sharks, and many of the little nigger-boys that one saw about the towns had lost a toe or a finger. My husband, who had been spending the season in New York, where he held an exhibition of some of the miniatures that he painted, representing the heroines of George Meredith,



now joined me for a Christmas holiday, which saved me from feeling too desperately homesick. I must say our little party left Florida without much regret—but plus two young alligators, which Hubert Eisdell was determined to take back to England and to rear as domestic pets! For the remainder of the tour they were a source of constant anxiety, to put it mildly; especially one night, on board the sleeping-car, when one of them escaped from the over-life-size cigar-box in which he kept them, and was not recaptured until the next morning, when it was discovered under the soprano's pillow!

Travelling conditions on the other side of the "herring-pond" are very different to ours. The huge railway carriages all communicate, and are fitted up extremely well; but the long rows of sleeping-berths for all passengers, irrespective of sex, were rather a surprise. Luckily the terms of my contract had provided a state room for my own private use, so I was saved some of the erratic if amusing experiences of some of the members of my company.

The absence of porters at the stations was

one of our greatest difficulties. Our trunks had to be registered, and were supposed to be delivered at our hotel immediately after our arrival; but, needless to say, this did not happen with convincing regularity, and we were well advised to carry with us what was needed for immediate use, and at any rate for *one* concert. My dear aunt, Lady Priestley, my mother's sister, had presented me with a very handsome crocodile leather dressing-case before leaving home; but the massive silver fittings made it too heavy for me to carry, so I very soon descended to a much less imposing American "grip" for my toilet accessories, and a capacious brown canvas military kit-bag, which was given me by Lady Bective with a parting benediction. Her talent for appropriate gifts amounts to genius. She had said "it might be useful to throw in odds and ends at the last minute." It was so useful that I soon came to throwing odds and ends into its generous depths until it became so exceedingly fat and heavy that it looked like a huge brown sausage. In fact, it was christened "The Sausage" by my long-

suffering company. The two men took it in turns to carry (or drag) it with as good a grace as they could muster; but I fancy that I more than once saw one of them give it a vicious kick—under the rose! Notwithstanding such unlawful attempts to wreck “The Sausage,” it held out manfully all the way, and I don’t know what I should have done without it.

## CHAPTER XI

American Climate—A Beauty Specialist—A Paris Episode—  
Typical Extracts from American Critiques—American  
Headlines

THE air of the Northern States of America is notably far drier than that of our sea-girt island, and I believe American women have, in consequence, some difficulty in preserving the freshness of their complexions. But they make up for it by care and cleverness, and a wonderful skill in making the best of their great natural beauty of feature and figure. When nature gives out, art steps in ; not crudely, but with much discrimination and judgment, generally quite defying detection.

This art may, of course, be pursued to extremes. I remember an American woman once coming into the train in which I and my party were travelling—it was somewhere in the “middle-west.” She appeared a perfect vision, with a rose-leaf complexion, exquisite hair, and the figure of a goddess—a feast for weary eyes.

However, when night came she proceeded in public, and without embarrassment, to divest herself of her beauty. First her entire head of luxuriant tresses was removed and laid on a seat of the carriage ; next the aforesaid rose-leaf complexion was transferred with face-cream on to a handkerchief ; and lastly, a considerable portion of the figure of a goddess was carefully abstracted and rolled up. All this was done quite frankly and unconcernedly—in fact, when some of my party showed their interest in the proceedings, she gave them all her secrets with the utmost good-nature, explaining exactly how it was done, and furnishing them with the addresses of the various stores from which they could, for so-and-so many dollars, obtain the wherewithal to become goddesses, should they so desire. She told us she had been in the “beauty trade,” but had now married a millionaire and *retired*; but, like many other people who retire from their professions, she evidently found some difficulty in giving it up.

I thought the American food delicious, except in the smaller wayside towns at

which we occasionally halted for lunch. Some of the culinary customs have probably dated from the days of the *Mayflower*—such as serving a slab of cheese with every helping of apple-pie, and setting a dish of butter before each guest even at a dinner of many courses.

The custom of tea-drinking is not so firmly established in the States as it is with us ; and *green* tea is probably as frequently used as black. On one of the many occasions when kind people had entertained our whole party after a *matinée*, they told us they had ransacked the State for the very finest tea procurable, “ knowing how much we must miss our English custom.” But, alas ! when it was served, it taxed our ingenuity to disguise our sufferings heroically, and gulp down the frantic concoction without wry faces. But if the green tea was in the nature of a trial, some of the American *slang*, which was new to me, was a pure joy ! Such a word as “ stunt,” which comes in useful for literally everything, has since come into use here ; and the delicious expression “ grouch,” meaning something between a frown and

a fit of temper, we adopted with acclamation and brought back to this country, of course.

Before I left New York a lady came to see me to enquire whether I would come to Paris with my own quartet of singers to give a performance of the *Persian Garden*, as she wanted to give it at her house there in memory of a very dear relative who had been especially fond of it. After my return to England we duly carried out the performance. Three receptions were given: one for the American Ambassador and the diplomatic set, one for a Russian princess, and one for *all the dressmakers and their assistants* who worked at the various establishments that supplied our hostess's wardrobe.

Outside current fiction I do not know very much of Parisian seamstresses, nor do I know how much they understood of Omar Khayyám; but they certainly made an enthusiastic audience and heartily enjoyed the excellent supper their hostess had served to them in the garden of her villa in the Bois de Boulogne.

Here are some extracts from a sheaf



of my American press notices, which I reproduce to show the quite extraordinary sympathy with which I was received throughout. Indeed, I did not meet with a single adverse criticism during the whole campaign, and I can never express my gratitude for all the kindness I received, not only from the American Press, but also from countless friends that I made during my travels in the vast country which had been the first, be it remembered, to receive my music with open arms.

One thing that gratified me particularly was the cordiality with which the *Nonsense Songs* were received. I had been rather nervous on this point, not knowing whether Americans would enter into the spirit of Lewis Carroll's very English humour; but I found the immortal *Alice* as much a household word there as here.

In offering the following extracts I have selected only those that include some vivid touch of transatlantic journalism or of personal criticism such as would scarcely be dreamt of here.

“You are told that Madame Liza Lehmann

has set the nonsense verses from *Alice in Wonderland* to a song-cycle. You go to Symphony Hall, expecting something sweet, and probably charming.

Guess again.

Four artists and one composer in Symphony Hall, yesterday afternoon, sprang the most complete surprise encountered in that decorous temple of art since its cornerstone was laid. . . . Suppose we give the cycle the sub-title, *The Songs that came out Right*. For that is what happened. . . .

And what of Madame Liza Lehmann, at the pianoforte? She seemed half-frightened and half-shy of it all, and hiding behind her compositions. The gratitude and the glory were, nevertheless, hers.—  
*From the "Boston Evening Transcript."*

After seeing Madame Lehmann as she appeared yesterday afternoon, at the Garrick Theatre, one wonders less at the gentle genius that pervades all her work. It is a reflection of her personality. It is easier to understand, also, how the same hand wrote down the beauties, thick clustered, of *In a Persian Garden* and the equally entrancing strains that make up the *Nonsense Songs* from *Alice in Wonderland*. After hearing both those compositions in one afternoon, the listener must be at a loss to determine which is of the finer order. He can be

really certain of just one thing, that light music, nonsensical, burlesquing music, if you please, may be very good music indeed. . . .

When Madame Lehmann announces that she is no pianist, she speaks from an excess of modesty.—*From "Detroit Free Press."*

A large audience braved the storm last night to hear Madame Liza Lehmann accompany in a recital of her own compositions that are famous the world over. . . .

The great composer received an ovation when she made her appearance, for nearly every one in the audience was familiar with her works, and was anxious to hear her interpret some of them on the piano. The programme was a splendid one, with great variety of style and character. . . .

It is more than likely that everybody who heard last night's recital is ready to declare that it was a gem from beginning to end.—*From the "Daily State Gazette," Trenton.*

It is safe to say that the fondest anticipations of all were realized. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to plan an evening's entertainment of higher merit that could be brought so fully within the comprehension of old and young musicians and less practised listeners. Many who were already familiar with her work as a com-

poser came last evening for the first time to know her as a teacher, a music enthusiast, a genius. . . . She enters most heartily into her work, and seems to be utterly absorbed by it. Her unaffected, gracious poise and sunny, wholesome mood are truly expressive of that element which has produced the best children's stories in the world, because of its delicate imagination and deep comprehension of the child-life that is the inmost life of us all.

This happy disposition has finely adapted Madame Lehmann to the interpretation of the *Nonsense Songs* from *Alice in Wonderland*, and it has done far more—it has enabled her to discern that spirit of Oriental philosophy and reverence and mystic awe in those selections from Omar Khayyám's famous *Rubáiyát*. . . . Her music has extended its inmost sentiment to within the comprehension of all who love song, whether they know literature or not. She has given new life to the lines and caused them to breathe anew of the atmosphere of moonlight and flowers, and, above all, the atmosphere of the mystic occultism of the East.—*From "The Times," Trenton.*

Madame Lehmann is noted over two continents for her work. Strictly viewed as music, Madame Lehmann's commentaries on the Persian poet's stanzas are un-

paralleled both from the matter of musical structure and of interpretation. She has taken the most popular passages of the great Persian poem, and has really shown genius in her setting of these famous stanzas.—*From the "Toronto World."*

Madame Lehmann's work as an accompanist for the programme was magnificent, and would have inspired even less confident singers. It was to be expected, of course, that the composer would infuse the spirit of her creations, but few in the audience were prepared for the delicacy and finish of her playing. Madame Liza Lehmann is a true artist in her special domain. Besides, she has a most engaging personality.—*From "The Post," Washington.*

. . . It is easy to prophesy that Lehmann will attain greater popularity, and that her popularity will have no relation whatever to the relative height of the brows of the public. . . . Nietzsche, in one of his impassioned tirades against Wagner, once said that the desirable music was that which gave pleasure and stimulated the digestion and other functions of the body, and for lack of better examples he cited Bizet and Mozart. If he had known the music of Lehmann he would no doubt have named Lehmann, for all the emotions excited by

the English song-writer are the pleasurable emotions of childhood—wonder, faint fear of the supernatural, and the love of simple beauty. This was especially evidenced last night in the Breton folk-songs and tales.—*From the "San Francisco Bulletin."*

Liza Lehmann belongs to all English-speaking peoples as rightfully as Shakespeare or Wordsworth or Joaquin Miller. . . . Her songs are in the music of the English-thinking men and women ; she deals with English poems, legends, and ideals, and only English words go with her songs. I have long regarded her as the most important of England's women song-writers, a composer whose songs have the vitality of folk-songs, although she has no such thought of them. . . . One of the geniuses of England, one of the greatest of women in music, is this present guest of San Francisco. . . .

In her light or tender moments Madame Lehmann is splendid. In her humour she is even better. She contradicts anything mean we have ever heard said about the English sense of humour. Her touch in setting Lewis Carroll's *Nonsense Songs* from *Alice in Wonderland* to music is as deft and adroit as the French touch. She does not miss a point, and she is mirth made musical.—*From "San Francisco Call."*



Madame Liza Lehmann, with her quartet of English singers, made a combination such as critics dream about but audiences seldom hear. . . . And, speaking of critics. . . . Three perfectly hardened members of that ennui-producing profession were seen by the writer wiping from their eyes tears of utter joy.—*From the "Cleveland Plain Dealer."*

When Madame Liza Lehmann closed her concert last night there was not one person in the audience who did not wish that she had just begun. Madame Lehmann's music is different from that of the average composer. It is full of personality and quaint surprises. . . . To any one at all familiar with the work of the Persian poet, the libretto is scarcely necessary. One can almost recognize the words in the music. In her *Wonderland* songs, Madame Lehmann has been equally successful. . . . Having once heard the music the words without seem to have lost their colour and life. . . . Though Madame Lehmann placed herself in the background she was not less than two-thirds of the concert, her playing and accompanying being so unlike that of the average accompanist as to be a different thing altogether.—*From the "Richmond Evening Journal."*



The Lehmann music is so uniformly fine-grained, so highly organized that it must in the very nature of things be a pleasure to listen, if the melodies and harmonies, pathos, sentiment, and humour are given anything approaching an adequate interpretation.—*From the "Detroit Free Press."*

The sister arts, under the magical wand of Madame Liza Lehmann, were made to weep or smile together as her poetic fancies expressed themselves in melodic measure. From Omar Khayyám to *Alice in Wonderland* is a long stride, but there was a most delectable bridge to span it. . . . Whatever the poet's mood, the sympathy of the artist responded, and expressed itself with rare artistry. A curious and fascinating feat was to make the music express even the punctuation marks. . . . This is the art of Madame Liza Lehmann. It is an unusual gift, which gives her a unique place in the world of music. Her modest part of the programme was ostensibly that of accompanist, but it did not take much discernment to soon discover her spirit governed the whole. Her inspiring genius radiated to her quartette, and sparkled from her finger-tips.—*From the "Des Moines Capital."*

The opening concert was given . . . by Madame Lehmann, the brilliant composer, who first introduced the song cycle which has swept over the musical world. . . . What was perhaps most striking is the wonderful versatility of Madame Lehmann's talent, with a marvellous way of fitting the music to the words, and such diverse styles of words—such freshness and vigour of musical imagination, such unexpected and brilliant elaboration of unusual themes, such sparkling gaiety and rippling humour, as in the *Nonsense Songs* ; such childlike directness and simplicity, as in the *Daisy-chain* ; such exquisite and wooing sweetness, as in the *Love Songs* ; and such an imaginative and lofty setting of the *Rubáiyát* and such dramatic force, as shown where the words call for it. An evening with Madame Lehmann's compositions lacks nothing in variety or beauty, and causes wonder as much as enjoyment.—*From the "Normal College News," Ypsilanti.*

Madame Liza Lehmann, a musical creator of something entirely new, gave to a brilliant audience . . . one of the most entertaining musical programmes ever presented in Denver. . . . There is no doubt, in the minds of the delighted audience which heard her, that Liza Lehmann was put upon this mundane sphere to set the stately

verse of the *Rubáiyát* and the weird fancies of Kipling to music, and then to execute the music itself. . . . It was ever the compelling genius of the composer at the piano that held the audience spellbound. Joy, pathos, love, passion, and delightful humour seemed to emanate from her delicate fingertips.—*From the "Denver Republican."*

It is safe to say that the recital was a unique event in the history of Lawrence. . . . It gave every one a thrill to realise that the graceful lady presiding at the piano was the master-mind from whom came the original and wonderful conceptions that were presented with consummate art. . . . The song-cycle, *In a Persian Garden*, is a well-known classic, one of the greatest works of modern times. . . . The second part of the programme was devoted to individual songs. . . . Perhaps the most noteworthy was the *Incident of the French Camp*. . . . Very few composers have succeeded in setting Browning to music, but this must be accepted as a masterpiece.—*From the "Daily Journal," Lawrence, Kansas.*

It stands in a class by itself, this presentation by gifted English singers of the intellectual artistry of the most artistically charming woman composer living. . . . It rested upon the merits of the product of

the brain of the modest Englishwoman, who sat almost diffidently at the piano for more than two hours, while the audience applauded and laughed and enjoyed. The usual phrases which are employed in describing or analysing the music presented on the concert platform must be left in their stock pigeon-holes for the time being and a wholly different view must be taken of the Liza Lehmann recital. And oh, the joy of listening for two delightful hours to a concert where there was not a word in a foreign tongue, just the fine old tongue of our fathers, set to music by a woman with whom the Americans are proud to claim at least the relationship of cousins.—*From the "Kansas City Journal."*

Madame Liza Lehmann has written many imperishable songs besides her admirable *Persian Garden* cycle. Of her rank among living song-writers we do not hesitate to say that she stands well in the front guard. Her compositions, whether serious or light, all show the work of an intensely artistic nature. . . . The humorous concluding cycle of four *Cautionary Tales and a Moral* brimmed over with merriment, and showed Madame Lehmann at her best.—*From the "Boston Daily Advertiser."*

Madame Lehmann's *In a Persian Garden*

is known wherever the English language is sung, and to her may be attributed the distinction of creating a demand for song-cycles which brought many into a field which still remains dominated by her. . . . One of the most attractive features was the recitation of Miss Constance Collier, who brought out the exquisite beauty of Oscar Wilde's little prose poem, *The Happy Prince*, with musical background by Madame Lehmann.—*From the "New York Evening Mail."*

. . . The compositions referred to are two of a cycle of nonsense songs written by Madame Lehmann. The poems are from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, and are given the sub-title *The Songs that came out Wrong*. The characterization is most fitting. . . . The one respect in which they came out right was in being absolutely perfect settings of the most delightful nonsense verses that have ever been written. Mme Lehmann has approached genius in composing this cycle.

There may be people in the world who take their music so seriously that they will not be able to enjoy these *Nonsense Songs*. If there are any such, they deserve sincere sympathy. But those who still have something of the spirit of childhood, and are

not born without a sense of humour, will welcome them with as much delight as the audience did last evening.—*From the "Journal," Chicago.*

The concert-goer should be thankful . . . in the programme provided by the English composer, Madame Liza Lehmann, the lover of music was treated to something wholly unstereotyped and entirely delightful . . . she revealed herself not only as a lyrical composer of rare versatility within the limits she has set for herself, but as that rare thing, a musician with a sense of humour. This latter gift is the more remarkable because she is a woman, and ladies with the artistic temperament are usually deficient therein. . . . There was a delicate feminine individuality in her music, and, while it is spontaneous and melodious, it is essentially thoughtful and skilfully harmonized. . . . As a delicate miniaturist in tone, she possesses a true genius, a genius that might be likened to that of Herrick among English poets, or Addison among English prose writers. In works like her three *Bird-songs*, and the song-cycle from *Alice in Wonderland*, she has achieved something absolutely inspired and delightful, something that adds to the joy of living. Light and gay as they are, these ditties



display a musical workmanship as profound and authoritative as the more serious output of many of the most notable of contemporary composers, and probably they will be sung when reams of gloomier works are forgotten.  
—*From the "Toronto Mail and Empire."*

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Now if you have had sufficient patience to read all the foregoing selection of the charming things that were written about me in America, you will understand how attractive it was to be there. For even to-day I am sufficiently vain to like to have charming things written about me. That is why I am putting these in the book.

We generally left a city on the morning after our concert, taking with us in the train every newspaper procurable. It amuses me now to notice how often critics referred to my playing of the pianoforte accompaniments, for I have little natural facility as a pianist. But I remember that I never read one of these kind references without a grateful thought to my friend, Irene Scharrer, whom I had induced, before starting out on my tours, to show me how to master the difficult passages that I had written.



Some of the flamboyant headlines to notices, printed in huge type—with secondary headlines in very slightly smaller type—amused me vastly, such as :

LIZA LEHMANN IS HUMOROUS  
WAGNER

PRESENTS QUARTET IN SIDE-SPLITTING  
LITTLE DRAMAS

TRAGEDY HEARD AS WELL

*San Francisco Chronicle.*

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KEYS OF PIANO PURL AND SING BE-  
NEATH TOUCH

HER "RUBÁIYÁT" RUNS GAUNTLET OF  
JOY, PASSION, PATHOS, AND LOVE

HAS NO PEER

Nonsense Songs Enrapture

*Denver Republican.*

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LEHMANN MIXES FUN AND MUSIC IN  
GOOD DOSES

"FOUR CAUTIONARY TALES AND A MORAL"  
IS RICH SURPRISE FOR HEARERS

*San Francisco Bulletin.*

## CHAPTER XII

American Interviews—Literary Discrimination—An Offer for  
an Opera—Music Clubs

I THINK I owe it to my readers to include a few much abbreviated specimens of the work of American interviewers, in case they have not realized how too, too charming I am—or, rather, *was when being interviewed in America.*

At the Brown Hotel this morning Madame Lehmann discussed careers and other things. She is a woman of the patrician type and of patrician lineage; her figure is graceful, and of that curve and fulness which implies perfect health; her face is wonderfully mobile and attractive, with its oval contour, its aquiline nose that, like a shout of imperialism, is set between calm, pale grey philosopher's eyes; hair that shimmers like sunlit bronze, and complexion of that peaches-and-cream variety which has become the despair of all women exiled from the snug little isle.

"How do my inspirations come to me?" she repeated. "Where others' ideas and thoughts take form in language, mine are in tone, and so insistent are they that I have to give them concrete form, which brings me to the point where I want to deny the assertion made by many men, philosophers and scientists, that women are incapable of dealing intelligently with the abstract."

. . . . .

Another rap was taken by Madame Lehmann at the time-honoured notion that women are without a sense of humour.

"That is all the veriest rubbish," she insisted, holding a pink tulle shawl about her shoulders with the most exquisite pair of hands that ever lured music from piano keyboard. "Women couldn't survive life and its disappointments, its harsh exactions on soul and heart and body, if they had not a well-developed sense of humour."

. . . . .

Madame Lehmann laughed a low, drooning laugh and explained that her remarks were not based on disillusionment.—*Extract from "The Denver Times."*

Waiting for a celebrity is a nervous business. Why? Because one never knows

whether a celebrity is *just* a celebrity, or a human being besides. Madame Lehmann's pictures represented her faithfully. She is a dear. She entered the parlour at the Bristol Hotel to find more than one person waiting in the half-light, and immediately turned to search for the electric light switch which was finally located in the hall. [I have no recollection of this, but it was thoughtful of me!—L. L.] She was simply clad in shirt waist and grey skirt, with grey suède slippers, and she wore a scarf, for 'twas chilly, and a twist of turquoise velvet ribbon in her hair. She carried besides a rare gorgeous beaded bag with jade rings for double handles. In personality charmingly English, artistic temperament in every line and movement. And her hands! Strong, fine, poetic, holding the eye in a perfect fascination. After the formality of introduction, everybody settled self-consciously into the depths of velvet chairs, prepared for the worst, which developed into the most delightful informal talk resulting from an auspicious beginning.

"I don't know how to interview anybody," began one of the Press laughingly. "And I never know how to be interviewed," said Madame Lehmann. "Let me see—what must I say?—oh yes, the composition. I have it here." She touched her forehead with one of those beautiful fingers,

and such an expression of visions unspeakable came into her eyes as was never seen.

“ Do you find much talent in America ? ”

“ A world of it—*wonderful* ! But ”—  
using her hands eloquently—“ raw.”

[What a fidget I must have been, and was I really as rude as that ?—L. L.]

This little interview with Madame Lehmann lacks the charm of her *English accent* and expressive mannerisms impossible to reproduce on paper. [The italics are mine.—L. L.]—*Extract from “ Houston Society News.”*

“ ’Twas brillig, and the slithy toves did gyre and gimble in the wabe.” That is to say, it was mid-afternoon, and Mrs. Herbert Bedford, surrounded by her bevy of English songsters, was seated nervously on the extreme edge of a sofa in her apartment at the St. Francis Hotel. Mrs. Bedford is the married *alias* of Madame Liza Lehmann.

The quotation at the beginning of the paragraph is—as you must know without telling, unless you are a disgruntled old bachelor, or a maiden lady without any little brothers and sisters—selected from Lewis Carroll’s *Nonsense Songs* for children,

which Madame Lehmann is famous for having set to music. Its appropriateness lies in this, and in the fact that it describes the situation so exactly. With everything thus explained, it is now possible to get down to cases.

Madame Lehmann, then, sat on the extreme edge of the sofa explaining the art of musical composition in words of one syllable. It is not often that one sees a real composer face to face, while to meet one of the fair sex is the event of a lifetime. For, while lovely woman beats us all at nearly everything, from writing short stories to painting huge canvases and selling ribbon, she is still shy about treading in the footsteps of Mozart and Strauss.

I asked the Madame why this was.

It was like plunging into ice-cold water to ask this question, for she had just arrived in town after the record long-distance car-ride of her career, and the piano hadn't come; the lights at the theatre were said to be on the blink, nobody knew what had become of the printed programmes, and the hour for the evening concert was drawing on apace. But Madame Lehmann held on to her nerves with both hands, and answered almost calmly :

" Woman has not been granted a liberal education until recently; music was one of the last arts to be taken up by man. I

see nothing strange in its being one of the last to be taken up by woman."

"Don't you think that the fact that composition is so largely a matter of logic and mathematics has anything to do with it?"

Madame Lehmann laughed. You see, she was human after all. After that, everything was lovely. Madame Lehmann even forgot the impending rehearsal long enough to say that music really was logical and mathematical, though she did like to have the inspiration of immortal verse to start with.

The rest of the interview is, perhaps, too shocking to repeat. The great composerine actually gave me permission to humbug the public as the public was never humbugged before. It being now absolutely necessary that the slithy toves should get busy with the wabe, she suggested that I might "turn loose my imagination."

Madame Lehmann is blue-blooded from the word, "go," and won't be able to understand a word of this write-up on account of its slang. I should sum her up about this way :

Brains, 80 per cent ; temperament, 25 per cent ; nerves, 60 per cent ; good breeding, 99 per cent. That adds up too much—and I have left out looks. But she is not travelling as a professional beauty,



and, taken all in all, she is certainly away above par."—*From the "San Francisco Chronicle," November 20th, 1910.*

Perhaps the press notice that gave me the most pleasure of all is one which I have unfortunately mislaid; but it dwelt on the fact that, whether serious or light, I chose my lyrics with literary discrimination. I do think, for the advancement of English song, native composers should be a great deal more particular than they sometimes are about the literary quality of the lyrics they set to music; and I think if composers were more fastidious, lyric writers would follow suit. As matters stand at present, composers are deluged with weak drivel all the year round, and it is indeed a lucky day for the unhappy song-writer when he finds "a star in the dust-heap."

Another trial is, that immediately a composer happens to score a success in any particular direction, he or she is literally bombarded with verses *on the same subject*. As an instance of what I mean, no sooner had the *Persian Garden* met with public acceptance than every

post brought me such little treasures as *Hark, the Bells of the Chin-Chin Mosque*; and after the *Daisy-chain* I was submerged by a tidal wave of would-be-childlike effusions, including such flights of inspiration as the following :

“ When nurse smoothes out my pinafore  
And Daddy’s home to tea.”

Or,

“ We are but little teeny folk,  
We know no grammar—no ;  
But baby brother Timothy  
This morning answered ‘ Bo ! ’ ”

As a matter of fact, apart from all considerations of quality in the verses, I have always tried to avoid repeating a subject, rather seeking to break fresh ground. One’s second cup of tea is generally inferior to the first. Seriously, I wish some of our really gifted minor poets, or major poets (sometimes it is not easy to distinguish one from the other), would study the requirements of song, and give the English composer better chances ! There is a technique in every branch of art, and to learn it and to know it does not imply being fettered and limited ; on the contrary, it is to gain possibilities.

I think it was Schumann who said that the best songs are those of which the music seems to emanate from the words when the composer reads them for the first time. This spontaneity is, of course, invaluable ; but it can only happen when the poem carries a distinctive rhythm, and when the meaning, however delicate, is clear, and also—which is most important of all—when it happens to respond to one's mood of the moment.

The suitability of a poem for setting to music does not necessarily follow its value as poetry, though bad verses should, of course, *never* be set. In my own case, there are many poets whose verses suggest music to me at once ; but there are others whose work generally presents some difficulty, often indefinable. Among the latter is my brother-in-law, Barry Pain. Indeed, it long ago became a family jest that I *could not* set his work.

One of the results of my visit to the States was the offer, from Messrs. Liebler & Co. of New York, of a contract for an idyllic English opera. The libretto was to be by that clever American playwright, Harriet

Ford. She planned a most attractive scenario, and Messrs. Liebler proposed to produce it all over the United States in the most lavish manner. The contract lies in my desk to this day, but *unsigned* by me ; for when it reached me, after my return to this country, I found that it contained a clause by which the producers reserved to themselves the right to introduce any extraneous music they felt inclined to. This is, of course, the customary procedure in musical comedy (it happened in my *Sergeant Brue*), but it would have been quite impossible for me to write music of the type required by the poetic subject in question with the sword of Damocles hanging over my head in the shape of the latest "coon song" or "rag-time" which might, for box-office considerations, be interpolated at any point. In such circumstances there was nothing for me to do but to relinquish what had promised to be otherwise a most attractive offer.

A feature of American musical life which, when peace and order reign here once again, we might well emulate, is the admirable institution of the music club.

These clubs exist all over the United States, and form centres where music-lovers meet regularly, notably for the study of part-songs, which they give with great finish. Concerts are given at intervals for which the best soloists obtainable are engaged, their fees being met out of the annual subscriptions of the enthusiastic members of the choir. The *St. Cecilia*, the *Rubinstein*, and the *MacDowell* Clubs of New York are notable examples; but even the small cities have their music clubs, thus encouraging the study of vocal chamber music. Ballad Concerts, as we know them in London, are practically non-existent in America; but there is a large public for a much better class of song than English publishers at present find much response for here.

A great number of the concerts at which my quartet and I appeared were in connection with such clubs; and a good many were in connection with the best colleges for the youth of both sexes; and delightfully keen and enthusiastic audiences we found these young people to be.

Another American idea which we might

advantageously borrow is that of engaging more first-rate professional singers for church services. Our musical schools and colleges produce thousands of young singers annually who would thus find more distinguished employment than in the ranks of the musical-comedy chorus, into which so many of them drift for want of better openings. Church appointments are much coveted and esteemed across the water, and many a musical "star" has begun a successful career in this way. Incidentally a church service graced by a beautiful solo, beautifully sung, attracts larger congregations.

## CHAPTER XIII

Provincial Tours—"Behind the Nightlight"—The Society of Women Musicians—The Human Voice

AFTER my return from America I thought to settle down and lead a quiet life. But concert-agents again approached me with a view to further tours in England, and several of these resulted. Sometimes only two singers were taken instead of four, and a dramatic star was added to the programme to render musical recitations, such as *The Happy Prince*, or *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde, or *The High Tide* by Jean Ingelow, for all of which I had written incidental music. This is an art-form that greatly attracts me, and which I think is capable of much development.

On some of these tours I was so fortunate as to have the co-operation of Lady Tree. On another, Miss Nancy Price produced *Behind the Nightlight*, a series of most



amusing child-descriptions of imaginary animals with human characteristics. These were originated by her three-year-old daughter, Joan, a great-granddaughter of Jenny Lind, and one of my many godchildren. I made musical backgrounds for them, and we brought them out in the first place at a concert in London. No little amusement was caused by such animals as *Stickle-Jag*, "whose coat is made of hundreds and thousands, so that he can eat bits off it when he can't find the sugar-basin"; *Hitchy-Penny*, "who scratches himself more than most animals"; the *Jonket*, the *Mossip*, the *Lowdge*, and the *Jaat Family*, "who are the oldest of all the animals, and have one long whisker and one short one"; not to speak of *Fat-tack*, "who is not fat all over like the Hibbertoo, but only in his face and his tummy, which is a very ugly way of being fat." The Lilliputian authoress was called to the platform and received an ovation—and a wonderful collection of toys! Selfridge's later brought out reproductions of the favourite of these animals.

In 1911 I was invited to become the first

President of the newly-formed "Society of Women Musicians." This I accepted, but, finding that it entailed too many demands on my already over-crowded time, I was compelled regretfully to decline the honour of continuing the presidency after the first year.

It naturally fell to my lot to address the Society at its first gathering ; and, as I chose a subject upon which I have always felt very keenly, namely, the treatment of the human voice by composers, it may not be amiss to reproduce here something of what I then said. Here, then, is a *résumé* of it :

When I was asked to become President of this Society I felt very proud of the honour my sister musicians had done me ; although I knew that I was scarcely fitted for such a position, and emphatically said so. I have not at all a *tidy* brain, with all the ideas properly classified and pigeon-holed ; nor have I the gift of putting into words much that probably slumbers within as mere instinct and sentiment.

There is a phrase written by Robert Hichens somewhere in one of his novels : " Art is a door through which we pass to

our dreams." I think that is beautifully expressed, but in my own case I have unfortunately the habit of dreaming on *both* sides of the door.

Therefore it is a very nervous woman that stands before you ; and I may confess that the thought of having to address such a distinguished gathering upon a musical subject—for these were my orders!—has been haunting me for weeks, and not at all conducing to my happiness.

However, I shall not attempt to don the "Giant's Robe," nor indulge in what the Americans call "tall talk." I shall merely beg you to be very kind and patient while I say a few words on a subject that experience has taught me to be really a vital one to young composers, of whom there are several here to-day.

I want in a few words to urge upon them the importance of studying the human voice as an instrument.

When we listen to a new work to-day for voice and orchestra, is it not an all-too-frequent experience to find that, although the composer has taken the trouble to make himself a past-master in all that concerns the orchestra, his vocal writing is exceedingly unvocal and awkward?

Strings, wood-wing, and brass are all splendidly written for, with the utmost ease and effect ; but the unfortunate human

voice is neglected or so woefully maltreated as to compel it to miss its due effect. When all is said about it, the human voice is the great Creator's instrument, and far more wonderful than any instrument made by man. It is capable of the greatest amount of tonal variety, capable of expressing the highest emotion, and—most important of all—able to convey the poet's most subtle meaning by combining *words* with sounds.

Surely, then, if you consider it worth while to give close study to the characteristics of the flute, violin, bassoon, why not give the same careful examination to the possibilities of this finest of all instruments, the human voice?

There is an ingenious little chart called *The Orchestra at a Glance*, much prized by the orchestral student. My own copy grew very battered a good many years ago. It sets forth clearly the compass of each instrument, together with some useful details as to what are "grateful" passages, what are difficult passages, and what are impossible passages, in other words the pitfalls to be avoided; and it adds a brief description of some of the salient accepted characteristics. It sets out the latter somewhat in this way:

"I. The *Piccolo* is rather pastoral in

character. Weber has used it to portray the diabolical, Beethoven to imitate the rustling wind, and Rossini the rushing of the avalanche.

"II. The *Bassoon* is able to express rural felicity. It has been employed to depict musical jokes.

"III. The voice of the *Clarinet* is that of heroic love, passionate, tender, and sympathetic, while its lowest notes are capable of being transformed into a voice the most terrible."

Well, I know of no such chart of the accepted characteristics of the different voices of singers.

Perhaps it is just as well, or it might read something like this—I mean it *might* have read something like this if compiled in mid-Victorian days. *We* have improved, of course!

The *Soprano* prefers to be called a "star," and to warble of birds, butterflies, and "spring—tra la." The composer should contrive to end with a shake (preferably marked *Lunga*) and the exclamation "Ah!" Otherwise the prima donna may arrange this herself.

The *Contralto* voice moves somewhat ponderously, and finds its best effects in dealing with infant mortality.

The *Tenor* is unfortunately a *rara avis*, and—equally unfortunately—knows it. See extra special chart of “300 Reliable Gargles.”

It is not imperatively necessary that the *Bass* voice should solely be employed to sing of revenge, life at sea, or (though these are always favourites) curses from the infernal regions.

However, to abandon our imaginary vocal chart, and return in all seriousness to my subject, it seems to me that, if at all possible, every would-be composer should make a martyr of himself to the extent of taking at least a few singing lessons, however little he may be gifted with a natural singing voice, merely that he may be able to test at first hand what the singing voice *likes* to do, what it does *not* like to do and never can make effective, and what it cannot possibly do at all. It amounts to this. There are certain difficulties which study will enable a vocalist to overcome; and there are others that no amount of study will *ever* overcome, namely; those that are inherently unvocal.

You may say: “We do not all *learn to play* every instrument in the orchestra before we attempt to write for it.” Possibly not; but these instruments have not to pronounce *words* while they produce sounds. **THERE** lies the extra complication!



The difficulty is to write such phrases as will not obscure, but will *help* the singer to illuminate the poet's text. To be able to do this successfully, the laws that govern the vocal art must be studied, and the sense of *fitness* in vocal writing must be so absorbed that it becomes second nature; and so that technical considerations do not tend to impede inspiration, but all the ideas flow along the right channels without conscious effort. I often think that if young composers obliged themselves to sing some of the phrases they write, and so hopefully expect vocalists to grapple with, there would be fewer lamentations that they "cannot get singers to take up their songs."

If for some reason it is quite impossible to study the rudiments of singing personally, then let the young composer cultivate the acquaintance of the young vocalist, and learn at second hand.

That, by the way, is where our Society comes in.

I will just add that I feel very sure that I owe much of any small success I have been fortunate enough to meet with to the fact that I was once a singer, and can therefore understand and sympathize with the voice.

I am not, of course, advocating that students of composition should devote as



much time and attention to the vocal art as circumstances compelled me to give. I sang in public for nine whole years—and how intensely I often wish that *most* of those years had been spent in the more profound study of composition in its manifold branches!

However, since it is proverbially futile to deplore spilt milk, even to-day when milk has “gone up,” I must content myself with being thankful that the nine years bore some fruit, and that they brought me into contact with many great artists whom I might perhaps otherwise not have met, and who have left me very sacred ideals of work.

I was told that I must talk to you for ten minutes at the very least, or be disgraced, and disgrace the Society. I think I *have* now valiantly talked for the prescribed time, and therefore I may be allowed to wind up by expressing my conviction that the Society of Women Musicians has “come to stay” and to shed the beneficial influence of its sincere and noble aims on all who come into contact with it.

It is a great movement, and one capable of immense expansion: and I can only repeat that I regard as a signal honour that my unworthy self should have been elected the Society’s first President.

## CHAPTER XIV

Cuxham—"Practical Hints for Students"—Belloc's "Cautionary Tales"—A Practical Joke—"Parody Pie"—King George and King Edward

I NOW began to feel the need of some quiet spot to which I could retire for complete rest during my own and our boys' holidays—some peaceful haven where one might "find oneself again" from time to time, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." Chance favoured me, and a friend—Mrs. Denis O'Sullivan—having told me of an available old-world cottage in the village of Cuxham, near Watlington, Oxon, I rushed down to see it, fell in love with it, and took it straight away.

I fear my infatuation was rather rash ; for, alas, the little house proved excessively damp (why are poetic houses always damp ?) and it was too far from London to be easily accessible for frequent brief visits ; and

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accordingly, after using it as a summer-house for three years, we, like the Arabs, were compelled to "fold our tents and silently steal away." But during our three years' tenancy, in spite of drawbacks, we spent many happy holidays there.

To begin with, it was great fun furnishing the cottage with all manner of discarded odds and ends from our lumber-room. The wife of the local blacksmith (whose trade had suffered with the multiplication of the motor-car) used to come in and "do" for us during the day-time, departing after tea, and leaving the supper laid in the quaint old oak-beamed kitchen, which was really by far the best room in the house. There, in happy holidays I used to cook the evening meal, with the assistance of the boys and an American chafing-dish. I became quite a *cordon bleu* at fried rashers, cut generously thick, omelettes, etc., etc. But the feature of our banquets was always the home-made jam which, Cuxham being short of jam-pots, had been preserved in all sorts of weird receptacles. We came to the conclusion that gooseberry jam preserved and sent to table in an old blue-and-

white soup-tureen tasted far better than any jam out of a mere pot !

The surrounding country was lovely, and the tiny village singularly primitive. In spring-time the birds sang so tumultuously that the parson's voice was positively drowned in the little church, and the pastoral tinkle of the sheep-bells in the wide pastures surrounding the cottage haunts me still.

At night owls flew round our windows, and even answered when called to. We were near the exquisite village of Ewell, with its celebrated old church. There is a rather unique tomb in that churchyard, erected by the grief-stricken parents of a boy who died long years ago. The inscription is shown to visitors as quite a curiosity because, in their agony, the heart-broken father and mother extolled the virtues and talents of the child they had lost, and had every detail carved upon the stone, even to mentioning that he had "learnt the French language fluently in three months." When the tombstone was pointed out to me I sat down and wept a long time, while my boys patiently waited, surprised at mother's "breakdown." The



*Rudin 1913*

RUDOLF E. D. BEDFORD

*From a silhouette by Herbert Bedford.*



death of a boy—that incarnation of all that is joyous, vivid, and potential, has always seemed to me far, far the saddest thing that could possibly happen in this world—in fact, the idea ever filled me with such terror that I could not bear to contemplate it. . . .

Oh, have we sometimes premonitions—or are we compelled, for some purpose beyond our understanding, to suffer that which seems to us most unbearable?

It was at Cuxham that I wrote my *Practical Hints for Students of Singing*, a commission from the publishing firm of Enoch & Son. Little did I think this was another landmark in my career, and that it would lead to my adding teaching to my other activities. When Messrs. Enoch asked me to undertake the work I felt very diffident about it. Perhaps my attitude will be best described by quoting the first few lines from the preface that I wrote for it.

When I was asked to write a book on Singing, I felt reluctant to comply.

There are so many admirable technical and scientific books upon the subject of Singing, written by men and women who have spent their lives in training voices,



Can anything new be said? Perhaps not. And yet, on reflection, possibly the circumstances of my life and career, which have brought with them a particularly wide experience in matters appertaining to the vocal art, may enable me to offer some few additional hints of a purely practical nature.

I have not only been a singer myself, experiencing at first hand every phase of that strenuous and nerve-taxing career, but, since I retired in favour of devoting myself to composition, I have been so fortunate as to come into contact with most of the vocalists before the public, and a great number of rising young singers. Many of both these have been good enough to tell me that they learn from their rehearsals with me, and annex fresh ideas which they find useful.

If, therefore, such hints as I have been able to give personally should, through the medium of this book, reach a wider field, and be of some little assistance to the ever-growing number of eager vocal students, it will bring me very great happiness, and I shall not in vain have consented to take up my pen.

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After I had written my *Practical Hints*, it occurred to me that it would be very interesting to read about other vocal



*Leslie. 1913.*

LESLIE H. BEDFORD

*From a silhouette by Herbert Bedford*



“methods” and see how they differed from or compared with my own. I consequently set myself an extensive course of vocal primers; and it was rather a curious coincidence that the method most akin to my own should be that described in the interesting volume *Singing* by Lilli Lehmann, that veteran Wagnerian singer who has kept the freshness of her voice so remarkably—a namesake, but no relation; in fact, we have never even met. But I heard her once, many years ago, in *Tristan and Isolde* at Bayreuth, an unforgettable experience.

My book was very well received, and not long afterwards my friend Mr. Landon Ronald, the Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, offered me a Professorship there. I hesitated very much to accept it; but, after a good deal of cogitation, I thought I might at any rate give the new departure a trial for a couple of afternoons each week. When I speak of the “new departure,” I don’t mean to say that I had not taught before then—for, indeed, my first pupil had already been on tour with me, and had appeared with great success.

For a good many years before I found a pupil that I should like to teach, I had been frequently asked for lessons, but had invariably declined. But I had now become thoroughly interested in this subject, and decided to take such young singers as seemed to me to promise well.

Once fairly launched at the Guildhall School of Music, it was only by exercising the greatest firmness that I managed to hold to the rule that I had set myself, and thus keep the number of my pupils within reasonable bounds. I was naturally determined to keep the major part of my time for composition, having no desire to allow the phase of my work that I most loved to go to the wall. So I continued to write much music—some frankly light, such as *Parody Pie*, a setting of some amusing parodies, and *Four Cautionary Tales and a Moral* which were set to extremely witty words by Hilaire Belloc. Their sub-titles will give an idea of the subjects :

(1) *Rebecca* :

who slammed doors for fun, and  
perished miserably.

(2) *Jim* :

who ran away from his nurse, and  
was eaten by a lion.

(3) *Matilda* :

who told lies, and was burned to  
death.

(4) *Henry King* :

who chewed little bits of string, and  
was cut off in dreadful agonies.

*The Moral. Charles Augustus*

*Fortescue* :

who always did what was right, and  
so accumulated an immense for-  
tune.

The *Cautionary Tales* were first sung by Madame Clara Butt and Mr. Kennerley Rumford at one of their concerts in the Albert Hall. It was probably a revelation—perhaps even a shock—to the legions of admirers of Madame Clara Butt's soulful rendering of sacred music to find that her versatility included a delicious sense of humour ! As an illustration of this I think I must give an account of a practical joke : \*

Some time before the war, my husband

and I were asked to dine *en famille* with Mr. and Mrs. Landon Ronald. Mrs. Ronald had provided a delightful menu, as is her wont; two maids waited upon us, and so absorbed were we in doing justice to the viands and in discussing various interesting matters, that we scarcely noticed the clumsy waiting of the second parlour-maid until Mrs. Ronald apologized for it, rather elaborately, I thought, saying she regretted having made the experiment of engaging a totally inexperienced parlour-maid from the country. "I see now why we have been invited," I laughingly answered—"it is a case of trying it on the dog!"—and, after thus having our attention drawn to it, we certainly did begin to notice that the vegetables were being handed to our right ear-lobes, the wine was being poured on to the tablecloth instead of into the glasses, and so on. Finally the second parlour-maid fled from the room, doubled up with what appeared to be uncontrollable hysterics—and, as she fled, I really looked at her for the first time, and said! "Poor girl!—do you know, her profile reminds me of Irene Scharref."



And then suddenly it dawned on me that a hoax had been played on us (though it was not the 1st of April), and I cried "It is Irene Scharrer!" And it was; and she promptly returned, in cap and apron, to finish dinner with us.

"Ah, just wait," I said to our hosts, who were crowing at the success of their fooling, and at the way we had been completely taken in; "just wait, *it shall be avenged!*" The joke lasted them all the evening, and when we parted I still threatened horrible retribution.

A day or two later my husband and I were dining with Mr. and Mrs. Kennerley Rumford, and, after telling them about the hoax we had been subjected to, and that we meant to retaliate, we then and there concocted our revenge. We were to buy a few dozen cheap plates . . . but I will not anticipate.

We sent out invitations for a little dinner-party, the guests including Mr. and Mrs. Kennerley Rumford, Mr. and Mrs. Barry Pain, Miss Maud Valérie White—and the culprits, Mr. and Mrs. Landon Ronald and Miss Irene Scharrer. The three latter

arrived early, and exceedingly nervous—in fact, they said they were sure we meant to poison them ! However, the dinner proceeded quite gaily until, during the fish course, one of our maids had the misfortune to drop a pile of plates on the polished floor with a good deal of noise. But the unpleasant little incident was soon forgotten. Unfortunately, however, just as the entrée was being removed, a whole tray-load of plates was dropped at the dining-room door with a *terrific* bang, and of course had to be cleared away with prolonged clatter, for which I apologized profusely. Till then no suspicion of anything but “ accident ” seemed to strike our friends ; but now Mrs. Landon Ronald caught my eye with a dubious look and the words “ *Is this it ?* ” But I parried the thrust, saying, “ Don’t you think I would have chosen a less *expensive* revenge ? ” and apparently the suspicion subsided. We were in the midst of a lemon *soufflé*, however, when there came yet *another* crash of plates, this time immediately behind Mr. Landon Ronald’s chair. He was sitting next to me, and with ready

sympathy and concern he picked up a fragment and whispered reassuringly : “ I don’t think it is the *best* service ! ”

But by this time the continued accidents and racket seemed to have got upon the nerves of more than one of our guests—notably on those of Madame Clara Butt, for she suddenly rose to her full height, and, with a wild expression of countenance, her eyes rolling as if her wits had deserted her, exclaimed, “ This is too much ! I can’t bear it any longer ! Give me plates ! Plates ! ! ” Upon this she snatched up her own plate and made as if to throw it across the dinner-table. But Mr. Ronald sprang to his feet, and, with an ashen face, prevented her. Still appearing quite demented and muttering incoherent sentences, she then tried to seize first his plate and then Barry Pain’s ; but this was again frustrated. By this time her husband, at the other side of the table, was also on his feet, calling out in commanding tones : “ *Sit down, Clara ! Control yourself, and sit down at once !* ” But, with a wild rush, the great contralto dashed to the sideboard, and, before any one could stop her, seized a pile of about

a dozen plates that happened to be there and hurled them into the fire-place, where they flew into a thousand pieces with a din better imagined than described. At this point the whole table was in commotion, and, seeing that Mrs. Ronald was white to the lips, Irene Scharrer trembling like an aspen, and that Maud White was on the verge of hysterics, I thought it was time to "declare our cards" and own that the whole thing was a practical joke. After this we were certainly in a position to cry quits for the prank of a few days before. Mr. Landon Ronald confessed that he thought Madame Clara Butt had gone suddenly and completely mad, and that his next thought was one of extreme pity for me that such a terrible catastrophe should have occurred at my house. I can only say that all those who were present could never doubt the histrionic gifts of Madame Clara Butt; but, nevertheless, I would not recommend that particular joke to my worst enemy.

The song-cycle *Parody Pie* was a series of "skits," and had the honour of being performed before King George. Some of

the verses were undeniably funny, such as Mr. Stodart Walker's lines beginning :

“ My true friend hath my hat and I have his.”

Or :

“ Blink to me only with thine eyes,  
And I will wink with mine.”

Or the verses entitled *Geyserbianca* by my niece Nancy Barry Pain (now Mrs. Gerald Boyle).

#### GEYSERBIANCA

(Mrs. H-m-ns)

The boy stood on the bathroom mat,  
A matchbox in his hand ;  
The Geyser, new the day before,  
He did not understand.

He scarcely dared to touch the thing  
Without his father's word ;  
His father, wrapped in sleep above,  
Snored on and never heard.

He called aloud : “ Say, father, say,  
The *gas* or *water* first ?  
If I turn on the gas before,  
Say, will the Geyser burst ?

“ Speak, father ! ” once again he cried,  
“ I dare not try alone.”  
And still no answer came to him ;  
The snores went snoring on.

He shouted but once more aloud,  
" Won't no one show me how ? "  
And then advanced with lighted match,  
And lit the gas first—OW !

The Geyser and the Gallant Child,  
The Bath—oh, where are they ?  
Ask of the maid who lost her place  
For sweeping them away.

NANCY PAIN.

In the original version *Parody Pie* ended with a skit on Tosti's celebrated song *Good-bye* ; but, as his publishers very strongly objected to the song being parodied, this number had to be amputated and another substituted. Signor Tosti told me that he personally had no objection, and I have never resented parodies of my songs—on the contrary, I have been flattered and immensely amused by them. An example occurs to me of a parody by the late Mr. Pelissier (of huge bulk), who warbled sweetly :

" If no one ever carries me—  
And I don't see how they could ! "

This was a skit upon Laurens Alma-Tadema's verses for my song, *If no one ever marries me—and I don't see why they should*, from *The Daisy-chain*.

*Parody Pie* and all other song-cycles

are at present scarcely ever heard for the same reason that choral works are now so rarely given—namely, the war-scarcity of male singers to complete the quartets and choruses. The performance above alluded to, however, took place at one of the Royal Amateur Orchestral Society's Concerts a few months before war broke out, and in these present days of little mirth I like to remember that I have seen our King laugh.

The late King Edward was always very kind to my father, and bought several of his pictures, besides sitting to him for the pencil drawing now in the British Museum. I remember a charming little incident characteristic of his noted geniality and kindness of heart.

One summer at Homburg, when I was quite a girl, my father and I were sitting in the park under the trees, listening to the orchestra. It was evening, and growing rather dark. King Edward presently arrived and made his way to a seat a few rows in front of us. Recognizing my father, he smiled, and made a friendly movement with his hand ; but, alas ! papa, who was rather



short-sighted, did not perceive it. In vain I whispered, "Look, papa, the *King*—over there—against those trees on the right." My poor father kept peering in the wrong direction, till at last the cheery Royal voice rang out, "I'm over *here*, Mr. Lehmann!" and the difficulty was overcome.

## CHAPTER XV

"Magdalen at Michael's Gate"—"Everyman"—Hamish  
MacCunn

THERE are two questions that I have been asked innumerable times : " How do your musical ideas come to you ? " and " What is your own favourite among your songs ? "

Both questions are difficult to answer satisfactorily, for who shall say how any idea arrives, whether musical or otherwise ? It simply is suddenly there—and sometimes at most inconvenient moments. I have more than once been reduced to jotting down a musical memorandum on an omnibus ticket !

As regards a favourite among the great number of songs I have perpetrated, I generally like them only while I am actually composing them ; but as soon as they are written down and in print, then all illusion vanishes, and a bonfire (between

Langham Place and Bond Street for preference) is what I should dearly love to see—it being understood that the bonfire consisted of compositions that I might indicate.

However, if I have any partiality, it is certainly not for such songs as figure best on my publisher's royalty accounts; but rather for the publisher's *step-children*. To this type belongs my setting of Henry Kingsley's *Magdalen at Michael's Gate*, which I wrote for Madame Melba. She has honoured me by singing it frequently. The poem appealed to me instantly, and really compelled my music for it; but the song requires an *artist* of a high order to interpret all the restrained drama suggested by the poem. Miss Mignon Nevada, gifted daughter of a gifted mother, gives it an interpretation full of pathos, and endows it with a charm altogether personal to herself.

The demand of my publishers for works of a light and humorous description, such as I had begun quite spontaneously and happily with the *Nonsense Songs*, became rather oppressive at one time, and was in danger of getting on my nerves; for, seeing that I was retained for a time by a contract

that gave a single publishing firm the right to all my works, I felt in honour bound to carry out what was asked of me, so far as in me lay. But, unless one would sell one's very soul, one must write straight from the heart, and without any consideration of "market value" whatsoever.

And it was indeed straight from the heart that I wrote the music for the old morality play, *Everyman*, which was produced on December 28th, 1915, by the Beecham Opera Company, then occupying the Shaftesbury Theatre by arrangement with Mr. Courtneidge. As in the case of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, it was my misfortune to have my work, and in this case a work of serious character, produced during the Christmas holiday season. In the case of *Everyman*, moreover, it was at a time (1915) when the public was very naturally beginning to clamour for entertainments that would amuse them, and bring oblivion of all the griefs and hardships imposed by Armageddon.

There was a regular chain of contrary happenings. It is obvious that the unusual and austere atmosphere of the subject

required peculiar treatment and staging, demanding thought, study, and time. But how could producers give the necessary time when five other operas were also being rehearsed during the one week granted me for my rehearsals? The management, with a laudable initial impulse, retained Mr. William Poel, the poetic producer of the revival of *Everyman* in *play* form, to superintend the staging of my musical version. But his deliberate and thoughtful methods clashed with these busy producers of five operas at a time. My dear old friend and teacher, Hamish MacCunn, had hoped to conduct the work, to which he had taken a great liking, but was attacked by his last fatal malady, and became too ill to undertake it.

I have always felt, with regard to this great friend and musician, that his noble compositions have not yet achieved the full fame that they are entitled to. His magnificent choral "Border Ballads" have, I believe, never been performed, yet; but if he had written nothing else, they would be enough to hand his name down to posterity. He sent me a copy during his last illness,

and when I had perused them I felt so enthusiastic that I could not help ringing him up on the telephone to express my admiration. His wife told me afterwards that my few words of appreciation had touched him so deeply that he wept—and this a man whose manner sometimes led strangers into complete misunderstanding of the inherent modesty of his nature !

However, to return to the vicissitudes of my *Everyman* production, on the day of the first performance the prima donna who was to have sung the title-rôle lost her voice and could not speak above a sepulchral whisper ! Miss Edith Clegg bravely undertook the part at the eleventh hour, and showed her artistry by a beautiful and poetic reading of the character. But, in order to take up that part, she naturally had to relinquish the other important one which was to have been her own. Another singer had, accordingly, to be hurriedly brought in to replace her in the *General Post* that ensued ; and she had not even walked through her part when the performance began. The stage business of the prologue had to be entirely altered at the last

moment owing to some unforeseen difficulty with the curtains ; in the last scene the angels, who should have looked like Botticelli pictures, were not provided with wings, and looked more like the chorus in *Norma* ; and, worst of all, Mr. Poel's Elizabethan background of black velvet draperies took so long to adjust that the audience was kept waiting for a solid forty-five minutes after Debussy's *Enfant Prodigue*, which had preceded my piece. In spite of all this the work met with a wonderfully warm reception from the public ; but the press did not take kindly to it, and its chance was gone.

I shall always regret that Sir Thomas Beecham was absent during this time, for I am sure he would not have allowed the work to be "pitchforked" upon the stage as it was. But I still hope some day, somewhere, to have it performed as I intended it, especially as I have, since the ill-fated production, corrected the fault of brevity of which the press (I think rightly) complained.

I know in my heart that *Everyman* was written with love, conviction, and sincerity ; in fact, I had an extraordinary feeling all



the time I was composing it, as if impelled to write whether I would or not.

As I had literally only one really sympathetic review, and as, moreover, it describes the work very much as I would have it described, I may be forgiven for reproducing the major part of it here. True, the writer of it came from New York on purpose to be present—(my dear America again!)—so perhaps after having undertaken the voyage he was predisposed to view my work through rosy spectacles.

### “ EVERYMAN ”

OPERA IN ONE ACT, BY MADAME LIZA LEHMANN

*Everyman*, which we have long known and loved as the morality play, had its first performance as an opera on December 28th. Madame Liza Lehmann set herself the extremely difficult task of writing not only suitable and appropriate music, but music that would not, so to speak, upset our preconceived ideas of what music to that play should be.

It is in just that particular that Madame Lehmann succeeds so admirably. From the first moment of the prelude to the closing chorus of angels there is nothing

foreign, nothing that is not strictly in the spirit of the old play.

The opera opens with the exhortation of the monk to "hear this matter with reverence, by figure a moral play," the music of this prologue being of a very solemn and rather sombre character. Then follows an invisible chorus ending with the summoning of Death: "Where art thou, Death, thou mighty messenger?" upon which Death appears. The scene between Death and Everyman which comes shortly after is somewhat in the character of the prologue, and the passionate pleading of Everyman with Death to "defer this matter to another day" is beautifully expressed by the composer. After this scene there is a charming bit—it is no more than a bit—where Everyman accosts Good Fellowship; it is a clever piece of writing, and conveyed the happy-go-lucky, not unkindly, character of Good Fellowship better than any long-extended passage could possibly have done. The "Kindred" scene, with its bright fugato passages, the scene with Riches, accompanied by the clink of gold, made exactly the impression that the composer intended. With the appeal to Good Deeds the entire character of the music changed. From rather sombre, and sometimes almost cynical music, it changed to music of appealing sweetness and depth. This, as well as the

following scenes, bore the stamp of sincerity, and like all things written from the depth of a great sincerity, went straight to the hearts of the audience. Then came the exquisite scene with Knowledge, followed by *Everyman's Prayer*, the most inspired piece of writing in the opera. It has a sweetening melody which is decidedly welcome in these days of machine-made composers who cannot write melody and sneer at every one who can. Then the scene in the church (off stage), followed by the trio with *Everyman*, *Good Deeds*, and *Knowledge*. Madame Lehmann knows how to write for the voice, and her knowledge stood her in good stead in this trio, which is very simple and extremely well done. The scene with *Beauty*, *Strength*, *Discretion*, and *Five Wits* could be easily a little longer, though that is a detail which Madame Lehmann will, in all probability, remedy later on. After *Everyman's* descent into the grave there is a splendid chorus of angels founded on the “*Good Deeds*” music, which brings the opera to its close.

The point might easily be raised that the opera is too short. Short it is certainly, but not too short. There is a tendency among us all to think that anything of a serious nature must perforce be of great length, accompanied by boredom. Madame Lehmann has shown us that we were wrong ;

as, although the opera was only forty-five minutes long, it lost nothing of solemnity by its brevity. The audience evidently thought so, at any rate, for more spontaneous applause has seldom been heard at any *première* of late. Madame Lehmann has shown us frequently what she can do in the lighter vein, with an occasional dip into the more serious style, as in her *In Memoriam*; but in none of her work has her great talent shown itself as it does in this latest creation of hers. It has a bigness, a broadness, peculiarly its own.

Mr. William Poel, of Elizabethan Stage Society fame, staged the work. Mr. Poel's work and the quality of it is too well known for any criticism of it to be attempted here. Black velvet draperies were used as a setting, and seemed to reveal the characters in the abstract more clearly than the mediaeval courtyard setting which he used on a former occasion in giving the play.

*Everyman* is a splendid argument for opera in English, as Madame Lehmann has written with a knowledge of the singing-value of English, and her handling of the inflexions in the recitatives was a revelation.

EUGÈNE MACDONALD-BONNER.

## CHAPTER XVI

At the Outbreak of War—My Son Rudolf—The Need of a Reform—The After-life—Quotation from Dr. J. Minot Savage—My Pupils—"Nothing is impossible"—Highgate Memorial—Last Words

"I fancy He who willed it,  
And out of silence drew  
This house of joy and rue,  
And with the darkness filled it,  
Thought, in His heart's high essence,  
The wisest thing to do,  
For me as well as you,  
Was, in the walls He buildd, <sup>built</sup>  
To hide, somewhere, the clue  
That leads us to His presence  
Above the starry blue."

From *The House of Life*, by MADISON CAWLIN.

I NOW approach a part of my life's story of which I can scarcely bear to write. But it must be done for the sake of continuity and completeness, as well as for other reasons which I regard as a duty.

When war was declared my husband and I and our two sons were staying at Hawley, in Kent, with Mrs. Charles Perkins, a dear

friend of ours, with an original mind and the great gift of making things pleasant for everybody in her vicinity.

Many and delightful are the memories of visits to her beautiful country home, where she had fitted up a "Composing Room" for me in an outbuilding, so that I might always have a quiet spot to retire to when the composing mood was on me. This sanctum was called the "Oak Room" on account of its panelling and timbering, and Mrs. Perkins and my family were occasionally invited to take tea there with me!

In her lovely grounds there were tennis-courts, and a lake duly provided with a punt that kept my small boys in bliss for hours at a time, and with pink water-lilies for the rest of us. There were also a pony, some pink flamingoes (to match the water-lilies), and a tame marmoset called "Whiskers." All these charming things seem now to belong to some dream of another and far-distant world.

During the first days and weeks after war was declared we did as every one else did—namely, scrambled for every edition





LIZA LEHMANN, 1918

*From a photograph by H. Spink, Brighton*





of the newspapers, always hoping and compelling ourselves to believe that the nightmare must be drawing to an end. A few weeks seemed the utmost limit of the duration of a war waged by modern methods. But, as the months passed, one began to have a glimmer of undreamed-of trials ahead—oh!—but no more than a glimmer!

Like every other man worth his salt, my husband immediately offered his services; for the first few months he was in the special constabulary, and from that transferred into the London Anti-Aircraft Corps, R.N.V.R., in which he has been working ever since. After commanding naval guns through all the London raids, he is, at the time of writing, in charge of a gun station in one of the outer rings of the London defences.

I am told that gunnery against aircraft is a new science; but I am proud that his study of the subject has enabled him to design some apparatus for the instruction of gun-commanders, of which the War Office has thought so well as to adopt and order it to be installed all over the country.

My eldest son, Rudolf, was then seven-

teen years old. He and his younger brother, Leslie, both went to Selwyn House School, Broadstairs, and from there they went on to Marlborough College. Rudie was just leaving Marlborough and wanted to join up at once; but, much to his chagrin and to my thankfulness, this had to be postponed for about a year, as an attack of measles had left him with a slight affection of the heart. This, however, yielded to treatment, and indeed nature had endowed him with an excellent constitution. None the less the delay chafed his young spirit terribly, and he insisted on my taking him again and again to be examined by a heart specialist. He was so anxious to be pronounced "fit," that he always insisted on walking at a snail's pace, for fear of making his heart beat faster and postponing the longed-for pronouncement. I can see him still, *creeping* along Clarges Street!

During the time of enforced waiting he worked systematically at his preparation for the military examination, and eventually, in the autumn of 1915, passed into the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, as senior gunner-cadet—very slim and tall (over six

feet) and quite restored to health and full of enthusiasm.

Alas ! he was only there a few brief months. In the snow and bitter east wind of February, he caught a severe chill. If he had been less keen on his work, less determined to do his utmost, his young life might have been saved, but although, under orders, he "reported himself" to the doctor, the latter apparently little realized how serious was the boy's condition. After ten days, during which time he ought never to have been allowed to continue his outdoor duties, his week-end leave was due, and he was just able to reach home—literally in time to die, for he was struck down by pneumonia, and, though we put up a desperate fight, he was past saving and in one week—on March 12th, 1916—he was gone.

Oh ! how can I write of it ? How can I bear to speak of such anguish as I have endured ? Truly I do so only from a sense of moral obligation.

I wish to blame no one ; such feelings of bitterness as I may have felt I have tried to conquer. But, for the sake of other boys

and other mothers, I want to urge the necessity for a simple reform. Who knows where these words, written in tears of blood, may reach ?

Why should not every Military Training College have upon its staff a *House Matron*, as there is at every public school and college ? These boys—mere lads straight from college—need to be *protected against themselves*, and, the finer the potentiality of the soldier, the more he needs a watchful eye, for the less will he wish to shirk or complain, little realizing, in his inexperience, that Nature can be tried too sorely.

My son never complained ; and when he lay ill at home, his one desire was still to go back to Woolwich and his work there, for he loved it.

. . . . .

After Rudie's death, his instructors and the Commandant wrote that he would have made a splendid soldier. I think, however, that, failing the spur of war, his natural gifts lay more in the direction of art or literature. An omnivorous reader from childhood—(he learnt to read surprisingly early)—he had an innate love of beauty ;

and, as a tiny mite, wrote some verses that were quite out of the ordinary, besides composing little melodies of much character and charm.

He learned to play the viola, and had a sympathetic voice just beginning to settle, and in the last few months of his life he began to draw very artistically. I wish I could reproduce here a few of his pen-and-ink borders to letters.

He had a beautiful and refined nature, with a strong sense of honour, very true and modest and simple. In truth, I thank my God for every remembrance of him, and his shrine is in my heart.

I think I could never have borne the immensity of my grief had it not been for the help of another mother who also had drained the cup of sorrow to the dregs—one who had also seen a young life cut short, and suffered that pain than which no pain can be greater. I instinctively turned to her, saying: "How do *you* bear it?" and she answered me with very simple words: "Because I feel that my son is often with me."

And other stricken mothers in these

woeful times—(among them Mrs. Kennedy, whose moving letter to Sir Oliver Lodge, in *Raymond*, is one of the features of the book)—have said the same thing, and said it with such conviction that even my dazed senses could not disregard the weight of their testimony.

Nor will the arguments of sceptics hold when they say that we poor mothers are unbalanced with grief and are fit subjects for delusion, since some of the foremost scientists of the day are more and more freely expressing their conviction that the law of continuity of life after so-called death can be scientifically proved, apart from all religious beliefs.

I have not had the solace of a strong faith ; my religion had been of the vaguest ; dogma repelled me and clouded my understanding. Shadowy hopes had sufficed me until this terrible time, hopes crossed at times by doubts, to the effect that religion itself might possibly be but an anæsthetic evolved by man for his self-protection. Better than I can put it, Mrs. Champion de Créspigny expresses this thought in the following poignant passage :



“Man’s very instinct to grope for a Deity may be a part of her (Nature’s) plan for the preservation of species, a deterrent when suffering man would end it by taking his own life.”<sup>1</sup>

But now!—if it were humanly possible to penetrate behind the veil—to find a clue—to know a little—ever so little more—could any effort be too great? *I wanted to find my child!*

Humbled to the dust, I set out on my pilgrimage, groping onwards, till to-day I believe that a merciful Providence permits the bonds of real love to *endure*—even betwixt the living and the so-called dead. But the quest is not easy. We still see as through a glass darkly, and rarely, oh rarely, are we vouchsafed glimpses of what we seek.

Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote of these rare revealings :

“It is in the hearts of many men and women—let me add children—that there is a great secret waiting for them—a secret of which they get hints now and then ; perhaps oftener in early than in later years.

<sup>1</sup> From *The Mark*, by Mrs. Champion de Cr  signy.

When I am dead my dearest: (Glorious Tenor)

Slowly

Handwritten musical score for the first system. It features a vocal line (Tenor) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics "When I am dead, my dearest," are written under the vocal line. The tempo marking "Slowly" is at the beginning. The piano part includes a "p" (piano) dynamic marking.

Handwritten musical score for the second system. The lyrics "Sing no sad songs for me, Place thou no roses" are written under the vocal line. The piano part includes a "p" (piano) dynamic marking.

Handwritten musical score for the third system. The lyrics "at my head, nor shady cypress trees" are written under the vocal line. The piano part includes a "p" (piano) dynamic marking.

Handwritten musical score for the fourth system. The lyrics "Be the green grass a bowie me with showers & dewdrops wet," are written under the vocal line. The piano part includes a "p" (piano) dynamic marking. The system ends with a double bar line and a fermata over the final note.

FACSIMILE OF A PAGE OF THE LAST SONG WRITTEN BY  
LIZA LEHMANN

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These hints come sometimes in dreams, sometimes in sudden startling flashes—second wakings, as it were—a waking out of the waiting stage, which last is more apt to be half-sleep.

“I have many times stopped short and held my breath, and felt the blood leaving my cheeks in one of these sudden clairvoyant flashes. Of course, I cannot tell what kind of a secret this is ; but I think of it as a disclosure of certain relations of our personal being to time and space, to other intelligences, to the transaction of thoughts and to their first great cause.

“This secret seems to be broken up, as it were, into fragments, so that we find here a word and there a syllable, and then again only a letter of it ; but it never is written out for most of us as a complete sentence in this life.”

And yet we are so apt to doubt our intuitions, though intuition was our earliest guide, coming to our aid long before experience, thought, or language crystallized. Without our intuitions, could we have survived ?

Perhaps this world-war, this great upheaval by which so many millions are plunged into bereavement and sorrow—

not the natural mourning for those who have fulfilled their destinies here, and in the fulness of time passed on, but the anguish and sorrow for the potential man cut off in his early promise at the very threshold of life,—perhaps this sorrow may have a side-issue even greater for mankind than the immediate result of this struggle of the nations. Perchance the immense number of hearts crying out—seeking—groping for a lead in the darkness, may touch God's right hand in the darkness, may bring about the evolution of a "sixth sense," and humanity may be granted more "light."

"Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"—divinely familiar words spoken by the greatest and most psychic of all teachers—a message to be ever more and more deeply comprehended.

For the ordinary person with little or no scientific education, it is difficult to remember that this world which we think of as *old* is in reality very *young*, indeed still in its infancy, that as yet humanity still stands upon the first rungs of the ladder of progress and enlightenment;

but I think the realization is facilitated by such a passage as the following, from Dr. J. Minot Savage :

“ Let us go back so many million years that there is no use in trying to count them, to a time when the whole of the space that is now occupied by any part of the universe that we can investigate with our largest telescopes was fire-mist, chaos, containing neither planet nor sun, nor satellite of any kind. . . .

*“ Millions of years roll away.”<sup>1</sup>*

“ The fire-mist moves and starts up centres of rotation ; and by and by you have somewhere in the midst of it a nebula or nebulae, in which a thicker condensation of fire-mist, but with perhaps a centre a little more dense than the outermost, parts. The mist goes on ; by and by a centre separates itself from the outermost parts by its greater rapidity of motion, and so flings off a ring—such a ring as you may discover round Saturn to-day. This ring cools, breaks, its parts tumble together, and by their rotation assume the form of a sphere, and begin their motion around the central mass. This central mass flings off another ring, and that falls into fragments and coheres

<sup>1</sup> The italics are mine.—L. L.

into another sphere, and the central mass throws off another ring. This process, they tell us, has been going on in the formation of our little solar system, the outer ones flung off first, and then another and another, until we get down to our little earth, which, in the process of cooling, threw off a ring which condensed and made our moon.

“Now, *after thousands of years* had gone by, this little earth of ours became cool enough so that certain kinds of life could live upon it, in the ooze of the water’s edge. We have the fishes, the reptiles, and the birds, then the mammals, and the gigantic animals, and then at last a feeble sort of being that did not know it was man, that we now call by that name—feebler than almost any of the other animals of its size. There had been a marvellous development of the brain, and, though it was weaker than almost all of its enemies, it began to have the power to outweigh its enemies, to out-know, to out-think. Under the form of cunning, it developed the ability to master the rest of the world. Then this cunning developed into a higher form—an intellect which ruled mankind. Then this animal developed something higher than intellect—the power to love, and out of love came conscience ; and this strange creature became a moral being.



And then out of the moral being, and around it, began to appear a spiritual nature."

. . . . .

Is it the first faint dawn of real day that we perceive through our tears? Are we on the threshold of a great new revelation? If ever there was a "world expectant," it is *now*, and the need of the times has generally brought the teacher. Who knows whether he is amongst us even now—and perchance, because he wears a frock-coat and carries an umbrella when it looks like rain, we know him not.

There is certainly at least one great man in our midst to-day who has had the courage to risk his career and great reputation as a scientist, and expose himself to the sneers of the vulgar, rather than shirk declaring any part of what he holds may be the pointing of the way to further knowledge and truth. I refer to Sir Oliver Lodge. If he were proved a thousand times mistaken, our gratitude and reverence should still go out to him, and to the other pioneers of the abstract realm, for their self-sacrifice and



courage, regardless of consequences. There is an Eastern proverb that I have always loved, which runs :

“The dogs bark—the caravan passes.”

. . . . .

There is not much more for me to say. I have renounced the pleasures of life—but, with the help of my new outlook and my new hope, it is my resolve to spend such days as remain to me in service for others.

When my great sorrow befell, I thought I should never be able to write another note of music—the fount seemed frozen. But I was still able to go on teaching my small flock of young aspirants, and to them I felt I could still be useful. Curiously enough, my brain has never been clearer ; and teaching, which a few years ago was thrust upon me, and taken up experimentally and with little enthusiasm, has now become a boon, for an earnest teacher must of necessity put self aside and sink personal troubles, however acute, if one's best thought is to be given to the pupil. Moreover, some of my pupils have been very successful and happy in their studies with me, and I

love to help their little barques put out to breast the tide.

After a while, too, I felt that I must make an effort to write some songs. My publishers begged me to eschew sombre thoughts, and write in a light and happy vein to help people to forget trouble in these times of universal anxiety.

So I sometimes sank my own feelings, and, trusting to be “helped,” turned my thoughts once more to the making of songs. And lo ! never have I written more quickly, or more easily—and the more swiftly these latest songs flashed into my mind, the more fortunate they seemed to be. Indeed—strange anomaly !—my publishers told me only a few days ago that my latest song, printed by them, bids fair to outrival in popularity anything of mine that they have previously published.

So I can but push on patiently, trusting, hoping ; and looking out upon the stars as often as may be, for, when I behold them, I say to myself : “*Nothing is impossible.*”

Even as I write, I hear the dull thud of the barrage, and my darling son Leslie (who lately has won a big scholarship at the

City and Guilds Engineering College, and has quite special gifts in that direction) is in khaki and has begun his military training. God help us !

. . . . .

There is an angel carved in stone upon a grave in Highgate Cemetery. It is the work of a gifted young artist, Muriel Perrin, who has responded to our trust with tender sympathy. Indeed, I think it so beautiful that I would not omit from these pages a picture of that gentle face which guards the spot where all that remains of my mortal garment will some day, too, be laid.

. . . . .

“The bird of time is on the wing.” This book draws to its end ; and I must say “good-bye” to my readers. It is time to have done with the element of *Moi—je, moi—je*, so detestable elsewhere, and so unavoidable in an autobiography.

“Don’t be proud of anything—but *don’t be proud of not being proud of anything*,” used to be a favourite nursery maxim ; but in memoirs one is *compelled* to throw



MEMORIAL TO RUDOLF BEDFORD AT HIGHGATE

*By Muriel Perrin*

"Love bridges the chasm"



bouquets to oneself ! It is the expected course. And in the end what remains of all the bouquets ? At most, a little petal dust and for a brief moment the faint odour of potpourri.

*Liza Schuman*

## AFTERWORD

**I**T was scarcely two weeks before her death that my Liza wrote to tell me that she had finished these memoirs, and we looked forward to going through them together during my forthcoming annual leave.

Ere that day came, my dear one had passed away.

She went in to the operation for the fatal malady that had so rapidly developed, full of a magnificent courage, and with the perfect serenity of one already quit of the dross of this world.

We have been on the crest of the wave together ; together we have been down into the depths ; but alike, in good and evil chance, her nobility of mind and her steadfast character have been to me and to our boys a splendid example and an inspiration.

December, 1918.

H. B.



The Nightingale that in the branches sang,  
Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows?  
*Omar Khayyám.*



## INDEX

- Accidents, 130  
 After-life, 213  
 A. L., 3  
 Albani, Madame, 77  
 Amendola, G. B., 39  
 American beauty specialist,  
     140  
   — Church music, 170  
   — headlines, 158  
   — interviews, 159  
   — music clubs, 168  
   — prairies, 131  
   — Press extracts, 144  
   — railway-travelling, 137  
   — tours, 124, 140, 159  
   — voices, 128  
 Aria, Mrs., 116  
 Artists' rooms, 53  
  
 Baker, George, 91  
 Bayreuth Festival, 63  
 Bective, Countess of, 49, 138  
 Bedford, Deputy J. T., 66  
 Bedford, Herbert, 66, 70, 97,  
     115, 136, 209, 226  
 Bedford, Leslie, 95, 98, 223  
 Bedford, Rudolf, 95, 99, 209  
 Beecham Opera Company,  
     199  
   *Behind the Nightlight*, 171  
 Belloc, Hilaire, 186  
 Benzon, Mrs. Elizabeth, 9  
 Bird, Henry, 30  
   *Bird Songs*, 117  
 Bisham, David, 77, 91, 103,  
     128  
  
 Blauvelt, Lillian, 100  
 Blumenthal, Jacques, 48  
 Boito, Arrigo, 36  
 Bonner, Eugène Macdonald,  
     206  
 Boosey, Arthur, 102, 103  
 Boosey, William, 118  
 Brahms, Johannes, 57  
 Brown, H. Rowland, 90  
 Browning, Robert, 7, 59  
 Butt, Clara, 187, 189  
  
 Campbell, Lady, 28, 63  
 Carroll, Lewis, 118, 144  
 Cats, 68  
 Chambers, Robert, of Edin-  
     burgh, 2  
 Chappell, Arthur, 51  
 Claremont Observatory, 135  
 Clegg, Edith, 104, 201  
 Collins, Mrs. Marcus, 116  
 Composition, Lessons in, 40  
 Créspigny, Mrs. Champion de,  
     214  
 Crossley, Ada, 94  
 Curzon, Frank, 104  
 Cuxham, 180  
 Cycling, 73  
  
*Daisy-chain, The*, 93, 194  
 Dale, Louise, 93, 102, 117  
 Dare, Zena, 102  
 "Darkie" audiences, 135  
 Davies, Ben, 77, 94  
 Dickinson, Professor Edward,  
     78

- Diplomatist's Wife in Rome*, 16  
 "Disowned Opera," 107  
 Doré, Gustave, 27  
 Dowie, Mémie Muriel, 62  
 Drawing, Lesson in, 29  
 Edison's Phonograph, 59  
 Eisdell, Hubert, 125, 137  
*Everyman*, 199  
 Ewell Churchyard, 182  
 Faucit, Helen, 8  
 FitzGerald, Edward, 71, 80  
 Fitzmaurice-Kelly, 60  
 Florence, Evangeline, 94  
 Florida, 135  
 Ford, Harriet, 167  
*Four Cautionary Tales and a Moral*, 186  
 Frankau, Mrs., 116  
 Fraser, Mrs. Hugh, 16  
*Geyserbianca*, 193  
 Gigliucci, Countess, 38  
 Gilbert, W. S., 72, 73, 114  
*Girl in the Carpathians, The*, 62  
 Goetz, Charles, 15, 75  
 Goetz, Mrs. Edward, 75  
*Golden Threshold, The*, 115  
 Goldschmidt, Madame Otto.  
     *See* Jenny Lind  
 Gounod, Ch., 74  
 Governesses, 11  
 Grey, Oliver, 90  
 Grimshaw, Atkinson, 27  
 Guildhall School of Music, 185  
 Haas, Madame Alma, 30  
 Hall, Owen, 101, 116  
 Hallé, Sir Charles, 51  
*Happy Prince, The*, 171  
 Harris, Victor, 128  
 Harte, Bret, 41  
 Henry, Julian, 125  
 Herkomer, Sir Hubert, 16  
 Heron-Allen, Edward, 15, 72  
*High Tide, The*, 171  
 Hichens, Robert, 173  
 Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 215  
 Housman, Laurence, 103, 105  
 Hunt, Alfred, 25  
 Hunt, Violet, 25  
 Hyde, Walter, 104  
*In a Persian Garden*, 61, 70, 75, 125, 143  
 Ingelow, Jean, 171  
*In Memoriam*, 91  
 Irving, H. B., 103  
 Jay, Isabel, 104  
 Joachim, Joseph, 50  
 Johnston, R. E., 124, 131, 132  
 Kendal Festivals, 49  
 Kennedy, Mrs., 214  
 Kensington Gardens, 16  
 King Edward VII, 195  
 King George V, 195  
 Klein, Hermann, 76  
*La Charmante Marguerite*, 52, 58  
 "Laddie," 100  
 Last song, MS. page reproduced, 216  
*Leaves from Ossian*, 115  
 Leech, Misses, 14  
 Lehmann, Alma, 15, 36, 75  
 Lehmann, Amelia, 15, 25, 72  
 Lehmann, Henri, 16  
 Lehmann, Lilli, 185  
 Lehmann, Marianna, 14, 15, 100  
 Lehmann, Mrs. Rudolf (A. L.), 2, 3, 19, 31, 46, 52, 100  
 Lehmann, Rudolph, 1, 4, 26, 100, 195  
 Lehmann, R. C., 27  
 Leighton, Lord, 17  
 Lewis, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur, 24

- Life of a Rose, The*, 117  
 Lind, Jenny, 10, 32  
 Liszt, 3  
 Literary discrimination, 165  
 Local colour, 88  
 Lodge, Sir Oliver, 214, 221
- MacCunn, Hamish, 61, 200  
 Mackenzie, Marian, 94  
 Magazine, School, 15  
*Magdalen at Michael's Gate*, 198  
 Manns, Sir August, 38  
 Marchesi, Blanche, 117  
 Martin, Lady, 8  
 Maternal instinct, 95  
 Maurier, George du, 61  
 McCormack, John, 104  
 Melba, Madame, 198  
 Meredith heroines, 136  
 Millais, Sir John, 17  
 Mills, Henry, 94  
 Mond, Mrs. Emile, 89  
*More Daisies*, 94  
 Mormon Box Office, 133  
*Mr. Coggs and other Songs for Children*, 125  
 Mühlen, Raymond Von zur, 43  
 Mythology, 28
- Naidu, Soragini, 115  
 Needle-work, 116  
 Nevada, Mignon, 198  
 New York customs, 126  
*Nonsense Songs, The*, 118, 125, 133, 198  
 Nordica, Lillian, 56  
 Norwich Festival, 49  
 Novello, Clara, 38
- Ogilvie, Lady Griselda, 24  
 Omar Khayyám, 70, 72, 79  
 O'Mara, Joseph, 94  
*Once upon a Time*, 114  
 O'Sullivan, Denis, 94
- Pain, Barry, 15, 69, 167, 189  
 Pain, Nancy, 193  
 Palgrave-Turner, Mary, 125  
*Parody Pie*, 186, 192  
 Patey, Madame, 27  
 Pelissier, Mr., 194  
 Perkins, Mrs. Charles, 207  
 Persia, The Shah of, 5  
 Phillips, John, 4  
 Pianoforte, Lessons in, 29  
 Pig Book, The, 60  
 Poel, William, 200  
 Pope Pius IX, 4  
*Practical Hints for Students of Singing*, 183  
 Price, Denham, 94  
 Price, Nancy, 171  
 Priestley, Lady, 138
- Randegger, Alberto, 45  
 Reuter, Baron de, 5  
 Reuter, George, 5  
 Roman colony of artists, 3  
 Rome, holiday in, 62  
 Ronald, Landon, 113, 185, 188  
 Rounds, 96  
 Royal Military Academy, 210  
 Rubinstein, 41  
 Rubinstein Club, New York, 48, 169  
 Rumford, R. Kennerley, 91, 187, 189  
 Ryley, Madeleine Lucette, 69
- San Francisco, 133  
 Savage, Dr. J. Minot, 219  
 Sayers, Alice, 100  
 Scharer, Irene, 157, 188  
 Schumann, Clara, 57, 58  
 Schumann, Robert, 57, 167  
 Schuster, Leo Frank, 49  
*Selfish Giant, The*, 171  
*Sergeant Brue*, 101, 168  
 Singing, Lessons in, 31  
 Sleep, 130

- Society of Women Musicians, 173  
Stanford, Sir Charles, 51  
Superstition, 54  
  
Tact, 47  
Temple, Richard, 104  
Tomlin, Blanche, 125  
Tosti, Paolo, 38, 194  
*To the Moon*, 23  
Tree, Lady, 171  
*Twin Sisters, The*, 103  
  
Vedder, Elihu, 87  
  
Verdi, Giuseppe, 36  
*Vicar of Wakefield, The*, 103  
Voice, The human, 173  
  
Wagner, Music of, 63  
Walker, Stodart, 193  
Watts, G. F., 18  
*When I am dead, my dearest*, 216  
White, Maude Valérie, 23, 72, 73, 189  
Wilde, Oscar, 42, 171  
Wilson, Hilda, 77  
Wright, Mrs. Theodore, 104











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Life of Wiza

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